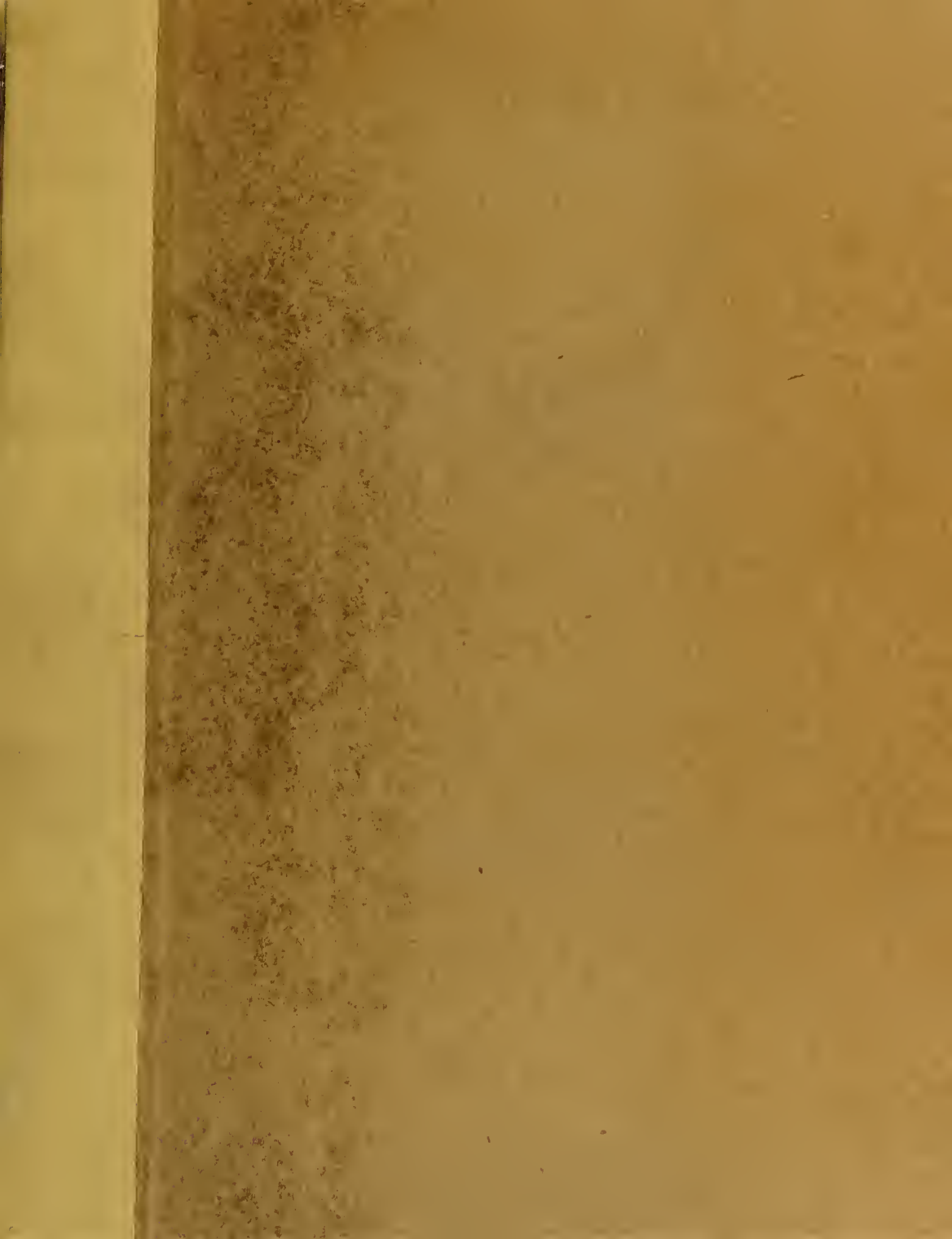
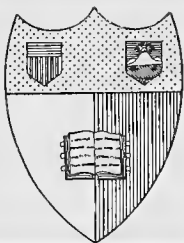






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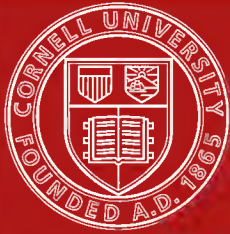
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The GREEN ROOM

EDITED BY CLEMENT SCOTT.



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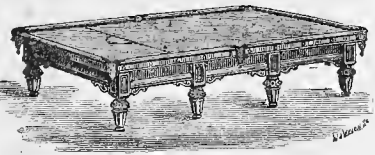
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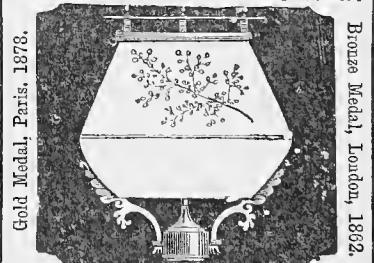
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THE GREEN ROOM.

A DEDICATION!

ANOTHER year has passed away,
And Fate has found your friends
united

To tell you stories of the Play
Before the Christmas fire is lighted.
We've travelled far, in many lands,
Midst rain and roses, heat and heather,
But hold us out your kindly hands,
And let us settle down together!

Take us away to some snug nook,
Tuck'd underneath your arm, my lady!
Let firelight fall upon our book,
Or autumn rays in gardens shady.
When reading here of youth and age,
The heart that wins, the love that
misses,

Let fall one tear upon the page,
Or cover it with secret kisses.

LONDON, *October, 1880.*

We only want your sympathies
In tales of love, despair, disaster,
We'd bring the tear-mists to your eyes,
And make your hearts beat somewhat
faster.

Make us companions as you roam,
And then our mysteries unravel;
Leave us in peaceful ease at home,
Or take us with you when you travel.

We love to beg, when Christmas comes,
The time of fancy and of fable!
So ask us—will you?—to your homes,
And make us welcome at your table.
The stage's glow like life departs,
Though of the world it is the centre;
Give us a welcome from your hearts,
For that's the *Green Room* we would
enter. C. S.

THE MANAGER'S STORY.

By CLEMENT SCOTT.

THE GREEN ROOM! Yes, this is
the Green Room! Cast your
eyes round the place, my friend,
examine it, pry into every hole
and corner, search every nook and cranny,
leave nothing unnoticed. Pay particular
attention to the seedy-looking wall paper,

dingy mirrors, the worn carpet, the tumble-
down settees, the general air of dilapidated
gloom and second-hand finery; it is as false
as the colour on the women's cheeks, as
gingerbread as the properties, as hollow as
most things that belong to theatrical life. I
assure you, on my honour, this is the Green

Room, where hard-working men and women spend many weary hours of their arduous lives. The room, that if its walls could speak, would tell of the passions, the terrors, the ambitions, the anxieties, the generosity, the meanness, the unselfishness, and the jealousies that are contained in all lives, but are emphasized in that which finds comfort and sustenance in the pursuit of dramatic art.

Here authors come to read their plays, nervously sensitive and inordinately vain; they are commanders of the situation for a brief hour or so, and then are thrust out of the way by the legitimate exponents of all they have created or suggested. Here, a few weeks afterwards these same swelling authors come to be flattered and congratulated; to be cold-shouldered or cursed. From this room issues the young and untried actor, carrying his fate in his hands, and who returns to these worn cushions a hopeful or despondent man. Sitting here, the young actress receives the honest praise of her companions, or whispered words of timely warning. Here men and women hate one another with a violence and an unreason, a want of justice and an absence of humanity, known in no other section of civilized society. They fawn here, they "my dear" one another, they backbite, they tell tales behind one another's backs, they cultivate the religion of falsehood and deceit to such an extent, that people unversed in their ways are staggered, shocked, and appalled: but here also are uttered the most beautiful thoughts, here are done the most charitable deeds, here friendliness becomes a jewel on men's and women's breasts; here will be found the finest impulses of generous nature; here the right hand scarcely ever sees what the left hand is doing, and these

battered, broken walls have listened to better examples of the religion of humanity, than ever preacher preached, or saint practised.

They tell falsehoods about the Green Room, as they do about most other things in theatrical life; and hold this dingy place up to ridicule before the eyes of a hood-winked world. They say, these preachers who make capital out of reckless misrepresentation, that the young fellows about town come here to drink champagne and pay fulsome compliments to their paramours and their companions. False every word of it! They say that in this miserable and dingy apartment that has not a smile in it, that "the half-drunk lean over the half-dressed." A wanton and reckless falsehood, every word of it! There is no allurements here, no fascination, no deception. Who wants to see men and women with rouged cheeks and false smiles, pencilled eyebrows and ruddled complexions? who wants to behold them standing before the cheval glass putting on their smirk, preparing for an ogle, or working up a tempest of passion. It is no place for those who honestly love the stage; not because there is anything wrong done here—far from it—but because it is as cruel to gaze upon the tricks and formulas of those who represent for us the passions of our lives, as it would be to split a hole in the baize of the Punch and Judy show, and see the wretched consumptive Codlin or the seedy Short manœuvring the Marionettes!

So spoke a popular theatrical manager, and he grew so excited with his subject that I became alarmed, and regretted that I had ever asked to be shown the mysteries of behind the curtain life. My friend was an exception to the ordinary run of managers.

Had he been born and bred in the profession, as it is called, he would not have spoken so. He would scarcely have dared to be independent, and the freemasonry of his trade would have compelled him to have seen everything through rose-coloured spectacles, and not acknowledged there was ever a blot on the paper. So some men deceive others and deceive themselves.

But old John Larcombe was an honest and an independent man. He had seen the world, he had mixed with his fellow creatures who knew nothing about the stage; he took the good with the bad, the rough with the smooth, and he pitched his tent finally amongst the Bohemians, because he found that after all his experience he could find no more amusing companions, and no truer friends.

"But I thought," said I, hesitatingly, and with some reluctance, "that there were improvements in your Green Room, as in everything else connected with theatrical social life? I have been told of old blue china and Chippendale cabinets, poetic wall papers, and eccentric chairs, the sadness of modern England, and the colour of old Japan!"

"Likely enough, likely enough," growled old John; "it is the fashion on the stage; plays are overladen with upholstery, and when they have crammed every scene so full that the artists tumble over the furniture, they make a lumber store of the Green Room, that is all. No doubt it's all very smart and pretty, refined and cultivated, and the rest of it; but, on my soul, I don't find that the Dutch clocks or the delf plates prevent the backbiting and the slandering, the unreality, the hollowness, or the affectation of theatrical life, as I see it; nor do they produce more honesty or faith than

have been found in such worn old rooms as these since the good name of the profession at large triumphed over the cant and bigotry of its religious antagonists."

"But surely," I observed, "the attitude of society towards the stage"——

"Nonsense and bosh!" broke in John Larcombe—"the stage does not need to be taken up by any society whatever. There are black sheep in every fold, but there are men and women who enter our doors, from the star to the super, from the beautiful actress to the ballet girl, whose hands, so far as modesty and purity are concerned, it should honour society to take. Patronage is all very well, and is necessary to our existence; but patronage implies condescension, and on the whole I don't think we have behaved so badly that we require to be lifted out of the mire. Maybe if society gives us some of their black sheep to educate and instruct, we shall get deeper than ever into the mud, and add to our inborn Bohemianism their original sin of thoughtlessness."

There was no moving the old man, who in his rough, honest fashion, had taken a strange liking for me, and who had amused me for hours together with his rare store of theatrical anecdotes and personal experiences, so getting a chance I abruptly changed the conversation to a topic of the hour.

"Was there not a scene here last night in your theatre—an actress fainted, or something of that kind?"

"There was."

"What was it all about? Nobody appeared to know the exact facts of the case?"

"I wonder they did not invent them. Yes, it is quite true; the Lady Gladys—as we call pretty Gladys Evans—broke down with the heat, and we had to drop the curtain."

"Was it the heat?"

"Everyone thought so; but it wasn't."

"What was it, then?—a romance? I never knew Gladys Evans had one. I should have said she was the coldest woman in creation."

"My dear boy, I am not acquainted with her temperature, and don't think it my business to argue out such matters. That is a fancy of modern medical science. But she had a romance; and if you like I will tell you all about it."

We sat down in the deserted Green Room that quiet October morning, and the old manager told me the following story, in a curious earnest fashion that I shall endeavour to reproduce:—

"Why do people ever get married, I wonder? They had far better keep single, as I am, and cancel the loneliness with the independence. One day, when they were far too young to know their own minds, two friends of mine took the bit between their teeth, defied everybody, and became man and wife. I never could thoroughly understand the match. The boy—for he was but a boy then—was considerably younger than his wife, and had not a farthing to bless himself with. His wife, who was one of the prettiest creatures I ever saw in the whole course of my life, might have married anybody.

"'Why should she throw herself away on him, when she might have made such a splendid match?' thought the world. Some said it was love; others declared it was pique.

"It was love on one side—that of the man. He was a romantic, impulsive, headstrong scapegrace, was Charley Strange; and when he married his wife he was as infatuated as any man could possibly be. It was

nothing to him that his wife had seen far more of the world than he had; that the head on her shoulders was certainly wiser and more discriminating than his; that she had passed from flower to flower like a pretty butterfly, whilst his career had been that of a chrysalis.

"He was so much in love, so blindly in love, that he did not believe that anyone had ever felt before as he did. His egotism precluded the possibility of reflection. What if she had seen the world, and been flattered by other men? Was he not their superior? Was he not ever so much more capable of winning a woman than they? Many men think like this: they are often deceived.

"They met at a picnic; he had a ready tongue and a taking manner; he was convinced he had made an impression, and did not conceive that she could be flinty. He was one of those men who believe they can swoop down upon a woman and carry her off, as if he had the power and attributes of a classical god. If he could not woo in a shower of gold, like Jupiter, or turn himself into a flower or a fly, or a laurel bush, he could for the moment acquire a romantic dreaminess, and honestly believed he was irresistible.

"The girl he married listened, but was not convinced. To his utter surprise she put him off, but he persisted. In the end she thought better of it, and they were married, but Charley Strange believed, in his innocence, that he was preferred to the whole male creation. He lived to be undeceived.

"It was quite true she did marry him from pique. She had loved another man in that secret, mysterious, and absorbing way, that men never will understand. Some say the old lover jilted her; some insist that he never had an idea of the love that was consuming

her, wearing her out, and destroying the fabric of her life. Women when they love strongly, nearly always love in secret, they never tell their love; men, on the contrary, babble it to the winds of heaven.

"I think that she mistrusted her strength, she was determined not to wreck her whole future, and was indisposed to settle down to a confirmed spinster, or assume the beautiful and self-denying rôle of a maiden aunt. She became angry at the time she had wasted, and when she married Charley Strange, she showed that she was not mercenary enough to marry for money, and that she liked this infatuated young fellow as well as she would ever like any man—but the mysterious one whose name was never mentioned.

"They had no children, and to the outward world it was a marriage happy enough as such marriages go. They did not quarrel or enter into vulgar controversies, or dispute before the servants, or make any disreputable scandal. Any ordinary spectator would not have guessed that anything was amiss, or interfered with their perfect happiness. It took many years to ride the storm, and when it came there was not one living soul that did not pity the neglected wife, who, in reality, had contrived to change her husband's love into estrangement and indifference.

"She did not mean to do it, she did her duty, was spotless and irreproachable; but there was one thing she could not do, and that was to hide her heart, that through all these years had been secretly true to the only man to whom she could have been human and honestly affectionate.

"I don't defend Charley Strange," said old John Larcombe, eyeing me suspiciously, and striving to account for an astonished look that I could not keep back from my face. "My object is not to defend but to

state facts. It is the fashion of the day to make one responsible for the truths one tells. When a novelist is bold enough to call a spade a spade, he is hounded out of every circulating library for libelling his countrymen or countrywomen, as the case may be; and when a dramatist endeavours to make capital out of some social blot, he is stopped dead short by official authority, ever fearful lest some matters should be wrong, and that some influential lady shall take up the cap and put it on.

"The young man became mutinous, and was in the most dangerous possible condition in which to meet a woman who was sympathetic to his nature, and, what is more, requiring sympathy.

"Such a woman was Gladys Evans—the Lady Gladys. She had made a mistake in life, a grand mistake, and had married a man who was not cold or distant, but positively brutal and cruel. It was a love-match at the outset, but her husband got tired of her, and made her life a daily torture. He was a pretence and a sham. He had no money, and never intended to make any so long as he could borrow or scheme; an ill-conditioned creature who had become possessed of a woman who might have been ennobled by a good man, but was fast becoming brutalized by this man's cruelties and insults.

"She had always a taste for the stage, was clever as you can see, of a quick, impulsive temperament, capable of great affection, but one whose heart was easily hardened. She was not only a born actress but a student. Her talent did not consist of a pretty face and engaging manner. She had read and was well educated. She knew Shakespeare by heart, and was positively able to recite blank verse with propriety and meaning—a wonderful gift in these days.

"When the wolf was at the door the husband of Gladys persuaded his wife to go on the stage, because he wanted to loaf about, bet, idle, and play billiards. Once she had done his bidding and made a success, he became furiously jealous, and made a grievance out of his own proposal. I believe he beat her, but she never murmured. I saw the mark of his violence one day on her beautiful shoulder, but she did not complain. The stage was her home, her life, and consolation. For a few hours she could get away to her beloved dreamland, believe the scenes were true in which she acted, rest on her weary pilgrimage, and take heart. Her face brightened when she entered the theatre; it saddened when she left. Had she not been something of a genius she would have succeeded, for she worked so hard, but the more she was praised the more furious her husband became. On one point she was firm; she stuck to the ship. She refused to leave the stage.

"He raved and swore at the profession and everything connected with it, talked at her and her friends, ridiculed her ambition, and, on my honour, I believe he would have hissed her on the first night of a new part had not the indignation of the delighted audience prevented him. At last she could stand it no longer, and ran away from him. He repented and implored her to come back, went down on his knees and howled, but the brutal scar on her shoulder burned into her and fired her resolution. She refused calmly, and with a tone in her voice that carried a great deal of meaning in it.

"She was thus situated, married but unprotected, when she first met Charley Strange. It is curious how these things happen, but they drifted together, their natures assimilated; a certain magnetic force from him subdued her waywardness, and thus life be-

came a dream. It was all the sweeter because so unexpected, and their hidden life and secret love had such a romance in it that it became irresistible. Guiltless of passion, inspired by a mysterious affinity, encouraged and sweetened by sympathies over books and music and plays, and everything that gives life a charm, their friendship did not seem to them so wicked as it might have done because of its singular consolation.

"Who would believe there can be any romance in London? Most people think this pleasure is reserved for the dwelling-places of the poets, for beautiful scenery, and for solitude. But the young people who were so secret in their loves found a way of indulging their impulsive ideas and wayward fancies.

"Where did they not go together during these long years of secret courtship? The spring woods of Sevenoaks knew them for some stolen hours; they might have been seen drifting amongst the water lilies in the back waters of the Thames by Streatley and Mapledurham, Goring and Pangbourne; the grassy knolls of the park at Hatfield has been trodden by their feet, and when it was not easy to go so far afield, they discovered arbours of greenery in the London parks, and talked for hours in the semi-darkness by the misty lakes. At last the crash came; separation or conscience, and for months each wrestled with inclination and duty. Was she to go back to brutality; was he to return to indifference? Some demon tempted them. They knew the right path and they chose the wrong. Each had a bitter sacrifice to make. She the stage for ever—that was a promise. He his honour—that was clear. But they were young, happy, bound up as they thought absolutely in one another, and one morning the world woke up to discover their secret, and to find that they had gone.

"Where? Why, where alone could such people go—to Venice?"

"All that they knew of Venice was contained in a passionate admiration of Robert Browning's poem 'In a Gondola'—a love song that seemed only too good to be true. From those verses only they had learned about the mystery of the waters—the magic witchery of the scene—the lights in the Pucci Palace—the beauty of the Giudecca. They scarcely believed that the pictures could be so perfect, or the motion of a gondola so exquisitely soothing. Even to lovers it seemed too beautiful for this life, too delightful for the brief happiness of sinners.

"But full of themselves and anxious for fulfilment, they desired to test the poet's reverie. 'The moths kiss first!' she mused, and then 'The bees kiss now!' and he, seeing, far ahead but dimly, the destiny of fate, knowing the uncertainty of the present and the inevitable of the future, thrust all evil omens from him and murmured constantly to himself the refrain,—'Scatter the vision for ever! And now, as of old, I am I, thou art thou!'

"Venice is the one place in the world that is more than the fulfilment of expectation—it exceeds the utmost limits of hope. Amongst those wild blue hyacinths in the English parks, ankle deep in bloom and crushed flowers, it had been beautiful enough; away in the upper reaches of the Thames, where the long purples bloom and the dragon-fly hums his song amongst the riverside blossoms, it appeared as if nothing in this world could be more enchanting; but Venice from the first moment that the oars flashed into the mysterious silence of the water and the gondola glided by dank and ghost-like passages to the glittering glory of the Grand

Canal, was more than a satisfaction—it was an absorption.

"They could not speak; they could only look at one another and murmur incoherent sentences. They had not believed there was any place in the world like this. Everything soothed their nerves and subdued their restlessness. First the intense and delightful silence—the freedom from cabs and omnibuses, trains and tramcars—the hollow echoes of the gondoliers' voices in the unfrequented water lanes—the silent dreamy movement of the black barges passing and repassing without a shiver or a jar; next the music—music everywhere—music in the hotel courtyards amidst the oleanders—music crashing out into the still midnight air in the Piazza after dinner—music in the moonlight when the lighted gondolas passed up in procession to a serenade—music in the churches at benediction—music of enchantment in the evenings at St. Mark's—music hummed by the little beggar boys satisfied with a macaroni meal and dreaming upon the marble pavement and on the arches of the marble bridges; not common, vulgar music like ours, "Tommy Dodd" and the "Grandfather's Clock," ground out eternally by piano organs, and carrying irritability in every note, but music of hope and liveliness and inexplicable charm, ballads and songs of the country, hymns to the saints, and praises of the harvest and the wine. Lastly, there was the colour—such colour as is only feebly represented in the picture galleries of the world—colour on mosaic and frescoes, colour on the walls and on the flagstones, colour of gondolas and gondoliers, stripes and bands of colour on the posts in the great waters, and such colour in the air and sky as these two mortals had never seen before.

"There was not a single hindrance to the

charm of the scene, and they entered upon their pleasures quickly and greedily—they rushed at their enjoyments like children let loose in a hayfield. There was not a cloud in their heaven, the weather perfect, the time of the year early spring, the place apparently inexhaustible in enjoyment. Probably they did not see more in Venice than other people did; their diaries, if they kept them, were not fuller than their neighbours'; but when the bright fresh cry of 'Aqua fresca! aqua fresca!' woke them from their dreams—when they breakfasted near the King's gardens, and cast their eyes over the blue waters to the island churches and the distant Lido—when the white pigeons clustered about them on the great square, and from the tolling belfry there came out a procession of saints and angels—when they wandered out of the glaring heat of the sun into that jewelled tabernacle known as the Basilica, and were lost in wonderment at the magnificence and the colour—when they traversed the Palace of the Doges guide-haunted or alone—when they took gondola by day, and went to the distant islands amongst the fruits and flowers, or at night, absolutely alone save for the dumb and silent boatman, understood the meaning of a Venetian atmosphere—their thoughts went together, their expressions were the same. What the one felt, the other realized, and it was apparently with one voice that they said, 'Row home? must we row home?'

"And the end," I asked, astonished at the old man's eloquence.

"The end!" he sneered. "Can you, as a man of the world, ask such a ridiculous question? There could be but one end to such a foolish and impulsive dream. People of this world are not permitted to live in

that fashion, and it is not good for them. This life is not fulfilment, it is trial.

"How did the good old poem of Robert Browning end? The man was stabbed before the journey was over. You know the stage direction, is it not this: 'He is surprised and stabbed?'

"'It was ordained to be so, sweet! and best Comes now.

Still kiss me! The Three I do not scorn
To death, because they never lived: but I
Have lived indeed, and so (yet one more kiss) can die!'

"So died their love, it matters not whether in Venice or Rome, at Capri or Monaco, under the orange trees or along the Corniche Road. Chopin and George Sand could not prolong their dream existence, he with his music, she with her mind. Why then should they! It ended as such loves will end. Read Swinburne's 'Félice,' and you will understand the philosophy of such attachments. There comes a time when, on one side or other, the words had to be spoken:—

"'Live and let live, as I will do;

Love and let love, and so will I;

But, sweet, for me no more with you

Not while I live, not though I die.

Good night! good bye!'

"I daresay you will not believe me when I insist," went on the old manager, "that all this time, happy as they were, enjoying themselves as they did, that they were still dissatisfied in their heart of hearts. But it is true. You will understand it some day, when you are as old as I am, and have suffered so much.

"They were dissatisfied. I told you why at the beginning. He had sacrificed his honour; she the stage. They wanted to get back to both. In a certain sense they were both jealous at the thought of being sup-

planted. He had a wife ; she had an art. He wondered what his wife was doing without him ; if she had mutinied, as he had done ; if she had broken out into open revolt, and had wandered back to the old scenes that were familiar to her ; if the ice had melted under another sun. She wondered what the stage was doing without her ; if she had been supplanted and forgotten ; her ears longed for the roar of the old applause, for the sight of the expectant people, for the ring of the passionate verse. She could not dream all her life in gondolas, and was far too fastidious to feed for ever upon bread and honey.

"And so they parted ; he to his own thoughts and dejection ; she to the stage—back again to her old triumph. She had the best of it, I am bound to say, for she had occupation, and he none. She was taken back and forgiven ; but he dared not ask.

"He lived for some years an altered, saddened, and dejected man. He was too much ashamed to seek for reconciliation with the wife he had injured ; she who knew all was too proud to look at him.

"Then came a curious coincidence. In his lonely moments my friend Charley Strange took it into his head at odd times to visit the places where he had spent the happiest hours of his life. He began with his childhood's days, and intended to end with Venice. The lonely market town where he had been brought up, and looked out of window, musing as a little boy ; the school where he had been a hero in his way ; the Swiss mountains he had climbed ; till gradually he arrived at a scene which recalled some of the most quiet and peaceful passages of his married life.

"He took train, and made for a village inn in a secluded spot in North Wales, close

to a waterfall and an enchanting glade. The sun was setting just as it had done years and years before. The air was laden with the scent of flowers ; there was no sound but the rushing waterfall, tossing out spray over the rocks and amidst the mosses and the ferns. He knew every inch of the way, and could have walked there blindfold. He wanted to reach a certain spot that was hidden, but still exposed—a nook, but yet a place that commanded a view that absorbed the beholder.

"Up he climbed, lost in thought, looking neither to the right hand nor the left, and turning sharp round a corner, found the old water-mill half-hidden amongst the trees.

"To his surprise, he found a lady there, dressed in mourning, sketching the very picture he desired to look at. He hummed an air, but could not attract her attention, but by peeping over her shoulder, he could see her work, which was true to the scene, but somewhat sadly coloured. No wonder, it was the evening hour ; everything was in the minor key.

"She had not observed anyone approach, she was so busy with her work. But at last it was time to be moving homewards.

"Looking once more at the scene, she sighed deeply. A tear fell upon the picture, then another, then a third. Gently she closed the book as the sun sank.

"She looked up. It was his wife !

"There, in the dim twilight, by the old water-mill half-hidden by the trees, he made his peace with her. His journeyings were over now."

"But the Lady Gladys?" I asked impatiently. "You said it was not the heat that made her faint last night."

"No, it was not the heat. She saw him last night for the first time since they parted.

He was with his wife, up in a box, and with them was a little girl, their first child."

"What a romantic story!" I observed.

"It is; but it is true. There are a thousand such contained in the memories that cling about the Green Room; there will be thousands more so long as the stage endures."

The old manager became so solemn and looked so sad when he had done speaking, that I ventured to banter him about his sudden depression.

"Why, one would think, old friend, that the Green Room contained some bitter memories for you, a man who has seen so much of the world, and who is considered a sceptic and a cynic; a man who speaks out just what he thinks, and is said to be dead to all sentiment, which I for one venture to disbelieve."

"Bitter memories for me," he answered, mocking me, "perhaps it has." There was a strange look on his face, and his blue eyes moistened.

Turning away from me he walked across the Green Room, sat down in a corner, and covered his eyes with his hands.

For a moment there was a silence. The room was quite still, and then with a voice charged with profound melancholy, he said—

"She sat here! The only woman who ever truly loved me! She is dead!"

I pressed his hand, and we walked away together, but before he left the room, he turned round, and looking back to the same corner, he said:—

"The Green Room! They are fools to abuse it. I love it better than any place in the world."

It was from the storehouse of the memory of old John Larcombe, that I was able to collect the stories of his enchanted room.

ACT III.

BY GILBERT A'BECKETT.

"OOR fellow! he seems ill this time, and in a deal of trouble. What a pity it is he will write so grand, and not keep to nature."

Mrs. Clive, number three, passed a letter across the breakfast-table, and took some clotted cream. Her husband clawed up his brother's handwriting with a glare.

"Keep to nature! Stick to business you mean. Confound the fellow! He never makes a halfpenny by his wretched scribbling, or keeps it if he does. Only a few years ago they came bothering me for five pounds to bury the boy, and now the daughter writes for five more—I suppose to bury him. I'm sick of it; they must manage with two."

Mr. Bartholomew Clive, of the firm of Harbinger, Harbinger and Clive, wrote the cheque, and sent it, payable to order, and carefully crossed, to his elder brother. He had managed, by judicious conduct in the course of a family quarrel, many years ago, to oust the latter from his birthright; but it is only fair to him to say that he had hated him honestly and cordially ever since. Having, moreover, in the course of his matrimonial experiences, led to the altar the heiress to a great tallow interest, subscribed regularly to several missionary societies, locked up a rich relative in a madhouse, earned a reputation for assisting real, but solvent, suffering, wherever met with, at the moderate rate of sixty per cent., and married three wives, all three for their money, it is superfluous to add that he was widely known as altogether a "safe man."

Of a different mould was his elder brother

Anthony. He did not believe in tallow; but he twice in his life beggared himself to his last halfpenny to save a friend. He was cursed with that amiable leprosy which people, who know nothing about it, call an artistic nature. He wept like a child when his father, who had wronged him, died. He forgave the brother who had robbed him. He had, too, vague theories that life was meant for something nobler than the skinning of society for what could be got out of it. Moreover, he wrote. In a word, he was altogether an unsafe man.

But there was a Grub Street in those days; and most of those who lounged up and down it, out at elbows, knew Anthony. He did not make much of a figure in their literary world—it was so stupendous. Yet they had done what they could for him—they had made him one of themselves. They had done this by giving him a long clay pipe, a pot of porter, and showing him the way to Parnassus; that classic mount was ascended thus in those days. So Anthony looked upwards, with a long clay pipe and a pot of porter, and found himself, at the ripe age of five-and-twenty, “somebody.” As “somebody,” he was familiarly slapped on the back in a club with a guinea entrance-fee, and hailed by some of the first intellects of the time, and by a good many of the second, as “Tony.” Before him, therefore, was a future of no common order. Many contributors of verses to provincial papers would have given their eyes for such an opening. Tony recognized this sterling fact, and was grateful. Here he was instructing a certain, sometimes an uncertain, portion of the British public at the rate of seven shillings and sixpence a column. Having, notwithstanding his method of ascending Parnassus, considerable depth and culture, and withal a quiet sense of hu-

mour, it struck him that, undeniably glorious as was this work, it was not exactly of the kind which he had purposed to himself a short time since, when taking his degree at Cambridge. He had looked to a more exalted platform. A perpetual lounge in the company of Steele, Addison, Goldsmith, Thackeray, and Macaulay, was what that magic phrase, “a literary career,” had conjured up for him. Literature was not only to supply him with a comfortable competency—this obviously as a mere matter of course—but was to sweeten, adorn, and elevate his life. Confident of its power to do this, he married a gentle girl who, with even purer and nobler aspirations, hoped with all his hopes, and saw all with his eyes. Indeed, with them she saw yet more than he; for she would never for a moment have consented to his making himself thoroughly comfortable on the ideal platform prepared for him, until room had been found, if necessary, even somewhere at the back, for Shakespeare himself. So, if love and sympathy could have given substance to his visions, Tony had lived right royally to the end. Unhappily, love and sympathy, useful things in their way, were powerless for this. They helped him, it is true, when he had to bury his boy for five pounds. But matters did not better with the fleeting years; and so it came to pass that when, after twenty of them had shuddered away—his gentle wife having long since passed, with all her hopes, to the practical quiet of a suburban cemetery—he found himself, in the back street of a provincial town, dying in the dingy poverty of a second floor, he realized that, for good or for ill, he had either not had, or if it had come to him unawares, he had somehow missed, his chance. Tom Berrymore, who never walked out without an original five-act comedy of his

own in his coat pocket, set it down to the iniquity of what every genius who has never belonged to it, knows as the "Dramatic Ring."

The public did not know, but Tom did, that the select few whose names were figuring everlastingly on every playbill were in league with metropolitan management generally, for the sole purpose of "strangling out" rising genius. Their signs and passwords were known. There was no secret about it. They met once a week in a coal-cellar in the Adelphi, and burning an original MS., bought by the pound from a starving outsider, drank to the "damnation" of all maiden efforts in boiling gin.

The "Ring" was therefore a powerful and admirably-conceived institution. However, whether or not the "Ring" had anything to do with it, Tony did not make his mark as a dramatic author. And so, at length, worry, disappointment, work, and want brought upon him the last dark hour of his life.

Here he was, dying, poor fellow. And as with his wasted hand he stroked the fair hair of the pretty child, a slender girl of sixteen, who sat by his bedside, a mist came before his eyes, and he cried passionately, but in a thin, feeble, and failing voice, "Without me! Merciful Heaven! what will she do without me!"

His little daughter kissed his white forehead, gave him some toast-and-water, and with a bright, hopeful smile, whispered a great deal of loving chatter in his ear.

It ought to have rallied the forces of a man dying in poverty and want, of a broken heart, for its substance was as follows:—

"Everything was taking a turn for the better. Uncle Bartholomew had sent a cheque for two pounds, which would pay a third of the rent. That was something,

wasn't it? But what was that to the letter from Mr. Tarragon, the manager of the Theatre Royal? That was quite glorious; could be read again and again. Could words say more than this?"

"THEATRE ROYAL."

"Dear Sir,—I have read your piece, *The Dark Waters*, again carefully, and like it, and propose putting it up for my opening on the roth. This will give us three clear rehearsals. As to terms, we will say a pound an act? Does this suit you? I'm sorry you are still indisposed. If you can't look in on me to-day, I will call on you to-morrow and bring my leading man with me. He wants a little more 'fat' for himself in the tag, and will explain. He is right about this. Act III. must have a bit more backbone in it. Think this over.—Yours faithfully,

"SIDNEY TARRAGON."

"There! wasn't the good fortune coming at last!"

The author of *Dark Waters* said nothing, but drew the hand of the loving little speaker to his pale lips.

At that moment a portly personage with a flaxen beard, concealing a very cruel and ugly mouth, pushed himself, without knocking, into the sick-room, and sat himself down in the one easy-chair, with his hat on.

"A nice fellow you are, coming down to this place and getting ill. I heard at the club last night you were really bad, but you don't look it. Why, you've twice as much colour as I have! What a humbug you are!" Mr. Bartholomew Clive got up quite annoyed. "I might have saved myself this journey," he said, glancing savagely round the room, "It's clear I've had it for nothing."

The dying man looked at his portly visitor steadily. A faint fire kindled in his

eye. "I did not ask you to take it," he said, measuring out his words slowly, with the emphasis of restrained but rising passion, "I haven't sent for you; and as I am dying, in the name of God, if you have anything human about you, go, and let me die in peace!" He drew his child close to him.

The other glared at him in earnest now.

"Oh! this is your gratitude, is it?" he growled, with set teeth. "Well, it's just like you. You've always been the same. Never been grateful for anything anybody has ever done for you. Here I've come down from town merely to see what I could do with your girl, if anything happened—and you abuse me as if I hadn't helped you out of half-a-dozen messes; yes, over and over again! And you back her up against me, do you? Why, you fool, but for me, she'd have to go to the workhouse; and you know it. Yet you rail at me, like a madman. You'd better look out, and not drive me too far!"

Mr. Bartholomew Clive had not much that was human about him, but it struck him this was a neat speech, and he gave it with point. The child made a movement towards him. She tried to speak, but her quivering voice broke in tears. She could only clasp her father tightly in her arms. He was sitting up erect in the bed now—a wild fatal flush on his cheek. His portly younger brother had, with an instinct of self-preservation, drawn near to the door that led to the sitting-room beyond, for he did not like being cursed by anybody, even on a death-bed; but in a war of words, with a safe retreat before him, it greatly soothed him to have the last. And so he took the handle and held the door ajar, not noticing that, as he did so, two figures entered the little sitting-room softly from the other modest entrance that opened on the grimy flight of stairs outside.

Both the new comers were clean shaven, smelt of tobacco tempered with gas, and had braid upon their coats. One possessed quite a brand new hat. This was Mr. Sidney Tarragon, the manager of the Theatre Royal. The other was distinguished by a rich brown wig, an almost too excellent set of teeth, and a plated pair of eyeglasses. At night, carefully made up, and with the first pick of the wardrobe, he did not look more than about seven-and-forty as Romeo. It had also been stated that he had played Lear five years ago in his own hair. He was an eminently useful member of his profession. This was Mr. Sidney Tarragon's leading man.

The two came in on tiptoe, looked about them, listened, smiled, nodded to each other, and finally sat down in an attitude of rapt attention, on the respective edges of two unsteady horsehair chairs. There was a moment's pause. Then a nervous, earnest voice broke the silence.

"Leave me, you coward!" it cried. "Leave me! Isn't it enough to have darkened the light of my whole life, that here—across my death-bed you must come and cast your hideous shadow! Ha! you wince because I, who have forgiven you—yes—seventy times seven, and, hoping that a change might come on you, have held my peace through the long, long years of your heartless, your brutal indifference—turn on you when the eleventh hour has struck, and tell you I call God to witness that, spite myself, the very name I bear, the very blood that flows within my veins are utterly hateful to me because of the mysterious curse which has made them common to us both.

"Does this sound so horrible to *you*! Look back to the day when, with smooth words, proffering your aid as a brother, you robbed me like a thief! Look back, I say,

to that day, and tell me with the last words that I shall ever hear from your lips, tell me, if you can,—tell me, if you dare, that for the wrong you did me then, you have not borne me a malignant and undying hatred ever since! You answer—nothing; but—whiten as I speak; whiten”—The voice of the speaker was choked; he fell back, feeling for something with his thin hands, as one in darkness. There was a child's agonized cry, and then the last words came. “But it is—over,” the sinking man whispered, in broken accents, “forgotten—and I say to you—with—my dying breath—‘I forgive you—brother!’ My child! it's over;—God help me!”

There was a prolonged burst of applause from four hands in the little sitting-room.

“Capital! that's what it wanted. You've kept all the fat for the finish, my boy; and, by Jove, I'll tell what I'll do. I'll make it five down, and a fifteenth share of the *nett*, if it runs a fortnight. There!”

It was a magnificent offer, and the jubilant manager, as, with a “I hope I don't intrude,” he peeped playfully round the door into the chamber of death, knew it.

Magnificent, however, as it was, it met with no response. A swooning girl knelt by a figure that lay prone, in an awful stillness, on a small iron bed; while something uneasy and ashen cowered and crouched in a corner.

Mr. Sidney Tarragon's practised eye took in the tableau at a glance, and noted its defective stage management.

“This hasn't been rehearsed,” he thought, rather soberly to himself. And he was right.

Act III. had not been rehearsed. But it had had a little more “backbone” put into it, and now—the curtain was down, and the play was over!

“THE TALE OF A PEACOCK.”

BY FANNY BERNARD-BEERE.

“ELL, my dear,” said the old lady, as she put her black bag on the table, and sat down in my cosiest arm-chair, “I've just heard of your success in the new part, and they tell me all the critics are enthusiastic about you, so I thought I'd look in and offer you my congratulations. I know the feeling myself, my dear, and I like to see the young ones getting on, especially a pupil of my own;” and she looked at me with a certain air of proud affection as she spoke.

Miss Griffiths, as everybody knows, had had a short but very brilliant career upon the stage some forty years ago—that mystic epoch which grumbling playgoers are wont to call “palmy.” Why she had left the stage and taken to giving lessons in elocution I never rightly knew; but there was some story about it, and although we had been great friends during the time I studied with her, I never, despite my curiosity, ventured to question her about her past. I am in excellent spirits to-day, for I have just made a success, and the old lady and I gossip away merrily on matters dramatic and otherwise.

“How pretty your rooms are, dear; may I look round?” and she starts on a critical *voyage autour de ma chambre*. Yes, there are blue plates, white lilies, gold screens, buffalo rugs, and Japanese stuffs (for I confess I had just started as an amateur æsthetic), and a very dainty little den it was. “You don't *eat* off them, my dear,” said Miss Griffiths, as she looked in a puzzled fashion at the plates; and then toys, and pictures,

and books, and china were subjected to a rapid *viva voce* criticism, as the old lady went circuit, and held solemn assize in various æsthetic corners.

Suddenly I remembered she had not yet seen my greatest treasure, and throwing aside the *portière* that divided the two rooms, I pointed out my peacock with a triumphant "*There!*"

It was a marvellous Japanese screen that had just been presented to me, and in all his glory of burnished green, and gold, and purple, the great bird was certainly one of my most wonderful idols, and I loved him as one loves a new toy. Turning for a word of appreciation, to my surprise I saw a curious frightened look on the handsome old face, and in a hurried, nervous way she said, "Where did you get that? Where did you get that? Take it away, child! take it away! Hateful feathers! they will bring you the bad luck they brought me;" and she was evidently really and seriously excited about it. I saw it was something not to be made fun of; and after laughingly pledging a solemn promise that that very evening I would get rid of the peacock, she became more reasonable and explanatory.

"I suppose you are not so superstitious on the stage now as we were in my day, but I was always told a peacock brought an actress no luck, and my old managers never would allow one near their theatre. I remember coming to my first rehearsal in what I thought was a very smart frock, put on for the occasion. It was trimmed with curled peacock's feathers. I shall never forget how old Sargent, our leading man, came up mysteriously and said, 'Go home, my dear, and take off that nonsense at once;' and then one night, in the Green Room, he told me the superstition. I laughed at it then, as you do

now, dear, but I remembered it many a sad day afterwards."

We sat down, and for a moment there was silence between us—a silence I did not somehow care to break.

"Surely not crying, my dear old friend?"

But there were tears in her eyes for all that.

"I think I'll tell you the story," she said, at last. "It will do me good to tell it to somebody."

And then I was told this "TALE OF A PEACOCK."

"You never saw Henry Marsh, I suppose? They used to say he was the handsomest man in London, and how bright and merry he was."

Yes, I remember having heard of "Handsome Harry Marsh," afterwards Lord Milford, and some dim recollection of his name having been coupled with that of some noted actress crossed my mind. I looked curiously at Mrs. Griffiths, but said nothing.

"I loved that man," she said, very gravely and quietly. "I am an old woman now, and there is no harm in telling you. I was playing in the great Shakesperian revivals that you must have heard of at the old house, and night after night he used to come and see me in the characters I loved best—Juliet, Ophelia, Rosalind, and Beatrice. Ah! London cared for me in those days! It has forgotten me now. I always knew where to look for him in the house, the third box on the prompt side, and our eyes used to meet just once when I came on. Men were wilder then than now, and good-natured friends gave me all the usual cautions. However, I soon learned to know and trust in the honour and truth of Henry Marsh, and we became fast friends. Friends, did I say? Ah! if it had only stopped there. I remem-

ber the day he called and said, 'Kate, I am going to take you to see my mother.' How old Lady Milford received me with stately courtesy! She had never seen an actress by daylight before, and she inspected me curiously through her gold spectacles. I was amused when I heard her say to Harry as we were leaving, 'What a perfect little lady! so different from what I had expected.'

"Then for a time there were bright, happy days. I was received at the house and made much of. I used to like being made a fuss of, and, with one exception, everybody seemed to like me. She was beautiful, certainly, with her grave, marble face and steel-grey eyes, and queenly bearing; and then, you know, she was his cousin, and very rich.

"Her conversation with me—a matter of rare occurrence—was very curious.

"'You must find it very annoying, Miss Griffiths, being forced to play the same part so often, and then having to dine in the middle of the day! I do indeed pity you.'

"Fancy pitying *me*, who had taken London by storm.

"'Do you know Mr. — very well?' — mentioning the actor's name who was at that time playing Romeo to my Juliet. 'How you can possibly pretend to feel all that love for him, I am sure I don't know; but then, of course, you've been taught.'

"An instinctive dislike grew up between us. Little hurried notes used to come from Harry, regretting he could not take me home after the play, as he had to take Lady Grace to a ball; and when she used to be in his box at the theatre, her cold eyes used to chill me, and I know I never acted my best. You know, my dear, what an unsympathetic audience is? Well, that woman used to positively ice the whole house—at least, I used to think so."

"But what has all this to do with peacocks?" I ventured to ask.

"Wait a bit, dear; I am coming to that. The season was coming to an end. I'll tell you the secret now. When my engagement was over, Henry Marsh and I were to have been married. What did he care for family difficulties and prejudices? What did he care for what the world said? he was his own master, and would marry whom he liked. He did care all the same, as I found out afterwards; and perhaps that is why he used to talk so much about it. I am not so blind now as I was then, and I see the weak point in his character only too well. 'I wish they wouldn't worry me,' he used to say, in an irritated way. 'Grace has a nasty knack of telling ugly truths.' I dare say she had.

"Then strange rumours reached my ears how he and Lady Grace were always in the Park together, and how people were beginning to talk about them. One night, when they were in the box, I could not help hearing little Jack Prattleton (who, for some reason or other, was always behind the scenes) talking to old Sargent: 'Quite true, old man; had it from the best authority; they are to be married in June; and a deuced good thing it is for him, too.'

"I knew by a curious instinct for whom the words were meant. Would it be a good thing for him, I thought? How was I to know that he was in difficulties, and that 'his people'—that vague collection of family censors—had pressed the match on him as the right thing to do?

"No, I won't have any tea, I'll tell you the end first.

"I was to play Ophelia the last night of the engagement. The Hamlet (he's dead and gone now) asked me the evening before, to come to rehearsal at twelve o'clock. He had

some new business in the play scene he wanted me to learn. When I arrived—I remember now, what a dull rainy morning it was—he said, 'Here's the idea; you have this fan in your hand, and as I lie at your feet, I take it from you and——' As he spoke he took out of a paper a large peacock fan. The old superstition flashed across me at once.

"'Oh!' I cried; 'it's so unlucky you know.'

"'Nonsense, my dear, don't you see I make a point with it? You know the lines:—

"For dost thou know, O Damon dear,
This realm dismantled was
Of Jove himself; and now reigns here
A very, very—*Peacock!*"

Here it is, and I throw it away—so; grand effect, eh? *

"In vain I protested. [In vain I suggested the old reading *Paiocke*, meaning a small piece of money, worth about three farthings, as a note in my edition told me. Hamlet was inflexible, and I had to yield. But the matter upset me someway, and I felt stupidly nervous and anxious about it. No letter, no sign from Harry to-day, and I was really 'out of tune,' as we used to say, as I dressed for the part that night.

"I was so anxious, that I had left word at home that any letter that came by the evening's post was to be sent on to me. The letter did come. It was given to me just as I was going on. One glance, and I knew all. Passionate protestations, vain, weak excuses—'forgive me,' 'better for both

of us'—I could say it by heart now. It was all over between us.

"Then our little call-boy squeaked out 'Miss Griffiths,' and on I went, my dear, with my brain throbbing, and a dull pain at my heart. I was mad and desperate as Ophelia herself. Was not Ophelia that night in desperate earnest? My hero-lover lost to me, my life wrecked, my hope of happiness gone? The actors seemed like dream-people to me. Mechanically I got through the opening lines. I had only to say, 'Madam, I wish it may,' (it's the cue for the Queen's exit, you know)—and then came the soliloquy, and my nunnery scene with Hamlet. Old Sargent, who was playing Polonius, said I never acted it better. God knows my whole heart was in it.

"How hateful the part seemed!

"'I did love you once,' said my Hamlet, and I thought my heart would break as I sobbed out the answer,—

"'Indeed, my lord, you made me believe so,' and got a round of thundering applause when I never looked for it.

"Then we came to the play scene. I wore the hateful fan at a silver chain round my waist—yes, dear, I *had* a waist in those days—and Hamlet lay at my feet and toyed with it. Instinctively my eyes wandered round the house and rested on the well-known box. Oh! it was cruel, dear, but so like her! She was there in *his* box. To give him his due he had not had the bad taste to come that night. She was alone with his brother, and never had I seen her look more cold or more beautiful.

"I had just given the line,—'Nay, 'tis twice two months, my lord,' when I saw her. What devil told her to come? And then—I can see it now—in her hand she waved a large peacock fan, almost the duplicate of

* I believe the origination of this quaint conceit is really due to Mr. Irving, but then I am not answerable for Miss Griffiths' reminiscences.—F. B. B.

the one I held in my hand. I felt the hot blood rush to my face as our eyes met. I forgot my part, forgot Hamlet, forgot the play; the myriad yellow and green eyes of the fan burnt into my brain. They seemed to grow larger and larger. They filled the whole box—they seemed to leer and twinkle at me from every part of the house.

"Hamlet was watching the play and the king from under his hand—the old business, you know, and did not notice me. Then the dumb show came to an end. My line was—

"'What means this, my lord?' I tried to say it, but the great eyes kept dancing before me, and the words, like Macbeth's Amen, stuck in my throat. Then suddenly everything was dark.

"My child, you must have heard the rest, for people still talk of it. How I fainted on the stage and was carried off, and how apologies were made for me and the mad scene cut out, and how I got brain fever and had to go abroad. His marriage, yes, he married her, came off while I was in Italy—that was my last appearance, dear; and now you know why Kate Griffiths is an old maid, and why she gave up the stage.

"It was all the curse of the peacocks, I know it was. You will send that screen away, won't you? Now I must be off, I have a lesson to give at three o'clock, and I want a rest first. I only came to congratulate you, and I have told you my own little tragedy. It's an old woman's story, is it not?"

I kissed the old lady silently as she went away. There is no peacock in my rooms now.

A STRANGE PASSAGE IN MY LIFE.

By E. L. BLANCHARD.

ON Wednesday, October the 1st, 1828, Covent Garden Theatre opened for the season with the comedy of "As You Like It." Miss Jarman (afterwards Mrs. Ternan) for the first time represented Rosalind, and Charles Kemble acted Orlando. At the close of the first act descended a memorable "drop-curtain," designed and painted by David Roberts, illustrating a temple in honour of Shakspeare, who was figured as leaning on a pillar surrounded by the nine Muses, while the Cathedral of St. Paul's, enveloped in a smoky atmosphere, formed a singularly effective background. The striking merits of a fine painting, which must still be vividly remembered by old playgoers, formed the subject of a lively discussion in the green-room at the end of the performance, and the artist was receiving from the principal members of the company warm congratulations, when the prompter hastily summoned Fawcett, the stage-manager, to tell him the front of the house was pervaded by such a strong smell of gas, that it seemed likely nobody would stay to witness the after-piece.

The explanation was then made that the proprietors of the theatre, resolved on having the gas supply under their own immediate control, had during the recess caused two large gasometers to be constructed, and that the manufacture now took place on the premises. Temporary difficulties in carrying out their plans were, of course, to be anticipated; but, in a day or two it was confidently stated, everything would be right. The unsavoury odour could not, however, be kept entirely out of the house during the

succeeding evenings, and on Wednesday, November the 5th, while a new comedy called "The Soldier's Stratagem" was being acted for the first time, the tricks played by the gas seriously interrupted the performance. All over the house the lights were flickering, then sputtering, and finally collapsing into small sparks. Several of the chandeliers went quite out, and had to be twice relighted. At the end of the first act Fawcett came forward and said that, with the permission of the audience, no further attempt should be made to light the chandeliers, and they might retain their seats without fear of disturbance during the remainder of the evening. Thus the boxes were plunged into darkness, and as nearly everybody then wore mourning on account of the recent death of the King's sister, the Dowager Queen of Wurtemberg, and the novelty of the night proved to be an exceedingly dreary affair, there was about as gloomy an assemblage as was probably ever collected in any place of amusement.

There was no great improvement in the lighting of the house during the week, and at last, on Saturday, November 15th, instead of the usual playbill appeared the following announcement, which is too curious a theatrical document not to be quoted in its entirety—

"THEATRE ROYAL, COVENT GARDEN.—When the brilliancy of gas illumination attracted public admiration, the proprietors of this theatre, anxious to adopt every improvement which would give brilliancy to the scenery, and the appearance of the theatre, introduced it; and to prevent the accidents which the best street illumination is liable to, they at a great expense constructed gasometers. Finding, however, that with the utmost care and skill the introduction of gas in the audience part of the theatre produced

an offensive odour, and the public having suffered inconvenience and disappointment in their amusements by the mischievous agency of some malignant and interested persons, the proprietors have determined to remove the gas, not only from the box circles, but from all internal avenues leading to them, as well as to the pit and galleries."

In order to effect these alterations the theatre was closed for a week, and the company, with Edmund Kean in "Richard the Third," performed at the old Lyceum Theatre. The next day the preparations began for removing the gasometers which occupied a large space of the lower vaults, under the Covent Garden Piazza. The locality may be roughly indicated as having been about forty feet below the spot where the Postal Telegraph Office is now situated. While the larger gasometer was being emptied one of the workmen, in his over anxiety, it is supposed, to get rid of the gas, made a small perforation with the view of burning it away. The flame produced by this unfortunately communicated with the volatile oil in the gasometer, and the fire, coming in contact with the gas, which was unavoidably floating in the arched passages, a fearful ignition took place. The workmen employed were scattered in every direction; some being driven along a lengthy vaulted passage communicating with the theatre, as if impelled by a torrent of water. All, however, though dreadfully bruised, escaped with life, except a poor fellow named Fennell and the superintendent of the workmen named Douglass, who at the moment of the explosion was standing on one of the gasometers. These two sufferers were driven in the opposite direction, and what rendered their fate peculiarly deplorable was the discovery that they had sustained life and strength long enough to break

through a four-inch brick wall, and had nearly succeeded in reaching a door of escape, when they were overpowered by the noxious vapour and must have died from suffocation, no marks of external injury being visible when they were found. Why the memory of this sad casualty is here recalled will afterwards appear. It is enough to add in this place that a substantial subscription was raised for the widows and families of Douglass and Fennell, and that when Covent Garden was reopened on Thursday, December 4th the public received the fullest assurance that no more gas should be used in the front of the theatre, that the circles of boxes should in future be only illuminated by wax candles, and that the lights in the front of the stage and of every internal avenue to box, pit, and galleries, should be of the purest oil.

When Mr. David William Osbaldiston became lessee of Covent Garden, seven years after the unfortunate occurrence just related, the writer of these pages was in a position by no means unfamiliar to many young men at the present day. He found it desirable to supplement an exceedingly small stipend, chiefly derived from some humble sub-editorial duties at the office of "*Pinnock's Guide to Knowledge*," then published at 3, Wellington Street, Strand, by any evening employment that could be procured. It had long been his earnest desire to obtain a practical knowledge of the mode of working stage machinery, and when an old friend of his family, Mr. William Bradwell, the ingenious theatrical mechanician, for many years associated with Covent Garden, proposed that he should be placed on the "property" staff of that establishment as a recipient of the nightly eighteenpence paid to extra hands during the run of spectacular pieces,

the offer was eagerly accepted. Throwing in such trifling literary services as a couplet or a comic song for a pantomime, and occasionally assisting in the authorship of a play-bill, the duties I had to discharge in this department were neither irksome nor unpleasant. The distribution of banners, shields, and spears was committed to my charge, and when "*Macbeth*" was played, I had to count out the exact number of branches required for Birnam Wood to come to Dunsinane, and to see that the forest sent on by human instalments was duly returned and stacked, when the scene was over, in its accustomed corner. When it was necessary for the evil demon to go below, it was my hand that gave the signal for the trap to descend, and the match to be applied to the pan of red fire; and, when the good fairy had to be despatched on some benevolent mission above, mine were the arms ready to receive her in the flies, and respectfully enfold the waist that had to be unhooked from the strong hold of the "traveller." When the revolving pillars of the ascending temple, used in the melodramatic romance of "*Aladdin*," produced such a pretty effect, that a round of applause was sure to follow, I felt, as the invisible promoter of this peaceful revolution, bound to acknowledge the compliment with an unseen bow. When the radiating star opened in the first scene of "*The Bronze Horse*," to inspire by an encouraging dream the slumbering Zamna, Prince of China—represented by Mr. John Collins, uneasily reclining on a most uncomfortable mossy bank in the foreground, and usually grumbling during his supposed sleep about calico flowers being nailed to his couch with sharp tin tacks, placed the wrong way—mine was the hand giving movement to the complicated mechanism. When

Claude Frollo was flung by Quasimodo from the Tower of Notre Dame, it was my mission to hurl through the window the substituted dummy, and my misery to learn that a left-handed deputy, appointed one evening, had sent the stuffed figure through the wrong window, and pitched it into the middle of the pit, among a crowd of amazed spectators, who, after nursing the tattered effigy for awhile in a seemingly affectionate manner, returned it with such force across the footlights, that it fairly knocked down Mr. Henry Wallack, who entered at that moment as Quasimodo, and sent the Esmeralda, Miss Vincent, into such a fit of irrepressible laughter, that it became necessary to ring the curtain down as speedily as possible.

On a certain unlucky Friday in the month of November, 1835, there was a consultation in Bradwell's room about calling into requisition for the forthcoming pantomime of "Guy Fawkes" some old mechanical contrivances which were known to be in existence, but being quite unknown to a later generation, were considered likely to increase the attraction of the Christmas novelty, without involving any extra expenditure. The task of selecting what was likely to be most suitable was assigned to me, and I received special instructions to look out for a certain "animated peacock," originally made for a pantomime produced early in the century, under the title of "Harlequin and the Swans, or the Bath of Beauty."

Delighted with the confidence reposed in my judgment, and illustrating the necessity of cautioning all ardent youths against excessive zeal, I resolved, without being asked, to begin my exploration at once. Familiar with the usages and the greater part of the subterranean region of the theatre, I procured from Sutherland, the stage-door keeper, a

fireman's lantern, which consisted simply of a candle-lamp with a protecting covering of wire gauze, and descended below the mezzanine floor into the cellars, to begin my investigations, hoping to emerge from the vaults with the "animated peacock" long before the afterpiece, which was the operatic drama of "Paul Clifford," had come to its termination.

These vaulted passages, running under the substantial arches on which the theatre was built, were much longer and infinitely more intricate than I had expected. Stored with a heap of theatrical lumber which had evidently been left undisturbed for years, clouds of thick pungent dust accompanied every movement of the crumbling canvas, and in the strange solitude of the place, the echo of an unwonted footfall had a peculiarly appalling sound. I had heard, as I came down the old stone staircase, the stirring melody of the Highwayman's song, "Hurrah for the Road!" and familiar with the tune, I now tried to repeat a verse, as an appropriately cheering ditty under the circumstances. I had hardly got as far as the second line, "Hurrah for the midnight hour!" when I found the reverberation of the words too terrible to endure. A hundred mocking ghosts with powerful voices seemed at that moment to be joining, out of tune, in a fiendish chorus. Those who have ever heard the resonant echoes under the brick arch of the railway bridge spanning the Thames near Maidenhead will have some idea of the remarkably weird effect produced. Decidedly it was not advisable to repeat the experiment. Vault opened into vault in such a mysterious manner, and with such persistent similarity of height and form, that if the echoes could have been rapidly formed into substance, one might have imagined

these repetitions of stony corridors the result of the loud reverberations just evoked. With the increasing difficulty of discovering the exact direction in which I was proceeding, came the unpleasant reflection that the two inches of candle brought with me in the lantern had very materially diminished.

At last, more by accident than design, another quarter of an hour brought me into the very vault where the accumulated properties of past pantomimes were evidently stored. Here were the basket-figures of the giants used for the inhabitants of Brobdingnag in "*Harlequin Gulliver*;" there rows of grotesque vegetable monstrosities, used by Grimaldi in "*Harlequin Asmodeus*." Dragon chariots were piled up, with grinning heads and tinselled frippery; while over a cluster of property sheaves of wheat, evidently representing many Christmases ago a pantomimical "*Harvest home*," peered forth some of the most terrifying masks, with strips of green foil still underlying their flaming eyes, that the wildest imagination could conceive. Behind an old Roman chariot, with its heavy Dutch-metalled wheels in a state of ruinous decay, was to be detected the proud, stiff neck of the "animated peacock" I was especially called upon to examine; and, on extricating the ingeniously constructed body of the bird, and working out the gigantic fan forming the expanding tail, it was a reward for much trouble to find the mechanical appliances were not so much out of repair as had been expected. Putting the lantern carefully down, and strutting about inside the body of the bird, to ascertain the weight of the basket-work, and learn the exact position of the levers working the neck and tail, I was not immediately conscious of a sudden diminution of the light; but, all at once, the horrors of the position I was in forced themselves

upon me; for darkness rapidly increased in intensity; and having dislodged some of the supports of the pyramids of properties around, huge masks tumbled down in every direction; and when I ineffectually attempted to grope my way back, every avenue seemed choked up and impassable.

As no one in the theatre knew of this expedition being made, and as this part of the house was never visited by the two firemen employed nightly to watch the stage, all chance of rescue seemed hopeless. The appalling reality was nothing to the terror of imagination. The pasteboard masks I had just seen appeared visible as illuminated faces of astupendously hideous kind. Every now and then, as a basket-work figure would fall, filling my throat with earthy dust, painfully suggestive of the graveyard, a gigantic gloved hand would rest, in the darkness, on my shoulder, or some heavy arm would throw an unwelcome caress around my neck. Then came worse phantoms. I knew I must be near the spot where the gas accident had taken place seven years before, and with all the ghastly details of which I had become so familiar when a boy. The two men who had lost their lives seemed to be wandering about, like myself, to escape from the tomb. A cold, clammy hand appeared to grasp mine every minute I moved to feel my way towards some possible hole through which I might creep. Burning eyes would flame through the gloom, and then vanish. There was a long period of unconsciousness, broken at last by an impression that the church of St. Paul's, Covent Garden, was at that moment striking four.

Following, as best I could, the direction from which the sound proceeded, I managed at length to emerge into an adjacent empty space, which I conjectured, rightly as it after-

wards proved, to be the spot formerly occupied by one of the old gasometers. High above was a grating, from which came a current of cool, refreshing air. Much time was occupied in building up from the larger properties a kind of platform on which a firm footing could be gained, and a chance afforded of once more communicating with the outer world. A long stick, with a pointed star at the top of it, which I guessed to be a fairy wand, had fortunately fallen in my way, and after more hours of anxious labour in building my scaffold, now assisted by a faint gleam of daylight, I mounted to the top, and pushing the starry tip of the wand through the iron bars, endeavoured to attract the notice of some passer-by. When voices grew distinctly audible, the pasteboard star at the extremity of my stick became more animated than ever; but I believe it was only the lucky accident of a market-woman dropping a penny from her hand on to the pavement, and stooping down to look for it, that caused this feeble signal, only an inch above the kerbstone of the Piazza, to attract attention. It was then nearly six o'clock on the evening of Saturday, and contriving to make my perilous position known, with promises of remuneration, faithfully fulfilled, the old market-woman went round to the stage-door keeper, who, not without some difficulty, at last procured my liberation from an involuntary imprisonment of about nineteen hours.

At all events, one of the most effective comic scenes in the pantomime of "Guy Fawkes," so remarkable for the admirable acting of Mr. C. J. Smith, in the opening, was a representation of the Zoological Gardens, Regent's Park; but how the revived "Animated Peacock" came to figure so prominently in it was told in a whisper, that till now has never gone beyond "THE GREEN ROOM!"

A TRAVELLER'S TALE.

By F. C. BURNAND.



EW tourists, even among those best acquainted with the inns and outs of Switzerland and the Tyrol, know very much about the charmingly secluded little village, or rather small country town, of Keinsolchberg. I hardly like to mention it, lest I should send Cockney tourists there in shoals, and spoil it for the happy few who, at all events once in their lives, have spent so many delightful hours within and round and about its borders. Borders! *we* were the boarders, *en pension*. And such a pension! so cheap, so good, so excellent! The things were neither rich nor rare, but there could be no question how they got there, being simply the produce of the farms. Boiled mutton—done to perfection! Vegetables, that would have fetched fabulous prices in Covent Garden; and such fruit as could not be procured for love or money anywhere out of the one dear old Keinsolchberg.

Yet, as it is highly improbable that the same festive party will ever visit the place again—for how can an unexpected success be repeated?—I may tell some of the secrets of this genuine Retreat, which is all that the liveliest imagination create.

Fancy then, an old-fashioned Tyrolean inn, situated on a plateau among the grandest mountains; sheltered from the north and east winds; commanding a magnificent view of both sunrise and sunset. Ah, what sunrises! what sunsets! In the far distance, the peaks of the as yet untrodden Bergengehen, whose virgin snows are I am afraid to say how many thousand feet above the sea level; while at our feet,

an easy descent from the inn, lies the placid Lac Unerhört, whose waters are of that deep transparent blue which communicates its peculiar colour to the fish that abound there, and to the wild fowl that build their reedy nests in its sedge. One part of the lake, frequented by bathers, is warmed up to a comfortable temperature by natural springs, which, however, lose their strength at a distance of some twenty or thirty yards from the bank, thus rendering the water beyond their reach doubly cold by comparison. The bathing-houses are primitive, but thoroughly comfortable, and old Peter Bösch, the boatman, takes good care that there shall always be a plentiful supply of warm towels, foot-pans, soap, and flesh-brushes for his patrons. Nothing pleases the old fellow more than to praise his skill and neatness, and to ask him to play a tune on his quaint reed pipe, as you dabble and splash about in the shallows; or to throw chalk eggs in for you to bring up from the transparent depths when you take a header from the extremity of Aigle Point—a rough rock which his ingenious carpentering has converted into a kind of gentle spring-board. Then the drives, the rides on mules or donkeys, through such varied scenery of rocky pass, dark forest, or open luxuriant plain, are simply unequalled, and, as far as I know, absolutely unrivalled.

Here is rest for the author, the actor, the artist, the politician, the composer. True rest, perfect repose for all who can enjoy the beauties of nature far away from the responsibilities of business and profession, and from the thralldom of conventionality.

Ah! will such a gathering ever again be seen at Keinsolchberg as when our joyous band of true Bohemians was there? May I tell their names, or would they rather that those happy days should remain a secret

hidden, as we were then, from the outside world, and from all that could remind us of smoky, hard-working, implacable London life?

I may hint at some; I may boldly name others. Who took the finest headers? who woke the echoes with the loudest songs and shouts?—Was it not the eminent statesman now at the head of affairs in England? Who caught the bluest fish in those dark blue waters?—Was it not the great tragedian who has made the Lyceum famous? And who ate the fish he caught, running off with them as fast as his legs could carry him up to the inn, and giving them to buxom Gretchen, with frying-pan in hand, ready to cook them on the spot, and thoroughly entering into the boyish fun of the whole thing? Who was this?—Was it not the lessee of the Folly, as, radiant with his morning's exercise of swimming and diving, he ascended to the highest point of the Aufuneider, and sang out a jödel in his full, rich, deep bass voice? Ah, happy days! happy days! A short, too short, holiday!

And who is this stalwart figure descending the heights with a gun over one shoulder, and a dead chamois over the other, which he occasionally whirls triumphantly round his head as he signals to his companions below to prepare for the breakfast which his keen eye and trusty rifle have provided, while springing from crag to crag on that steep and dangerous ridge? Is it gay Arthur Cecil, the young medical student, who has already won a diploma in a German University? Can it be? Now he is down. No; up again—he has only momentarily disappeared in a *crevasse*. But he fears no danger; for in the short time he has been here he has learnt every turn in the mountains, every nook and cranny known to the oldest cha-

mois hunter, and he can dare even the height of the Lacherliche itself without the aid of a native guide. Who are these skimming across the lake in a pair-oared canoe, laden with *kwacken* (the peculiar wild fowl) and *schücklebacken* (fish caught only in the lake)? Can these two strong-armed rowers be the lessees of the St. James's and Haymarket Theatres, with the musical critic of the 'Times,' J. W. D., laughingly clinging to the stern and splashing the water into the eyes of the present writer of the "Echoes of the Week," who is also taking his pastime in deep waters, and racing the editor of the "World" for the price of a pint of goat's milk, hot, before breakfast?

Ah! happy, thoughtless, careless days! Shall we ever again——. But no! Keinsolchberg, dear, quaint, hospitable, old Keinsolchberg will be as a dream of the past, as a happy reminiscence to many of us, as something that may be enjoyed once, not twice, and then be heard of no more.

And what fun was the picnic in the mountains! Fun!! There never was such fun! I declare most solemnly there never was! Can I refrain from telling the story? No, I cannot. Away disguise! I will call people by their names, as we did years ago, at the time I am describing. Remember, I speak of long ago—not too long, but sufficiently so to make me say, "I'm greyer than I was then." Then! when we used to call Bismarck "Bizzy," and my Lord Beaconsfield "Dizzy" (among ourselves, of course). When "Bill" Gladstone wore a rich brown moustache and auburn hair. You may see a portrait of him, a study in black, done by a rising artist in scissor-portraiture, framed and glazed for one shilling, and hanging up in the Commercial Room of Beach Hotel, Moorgate-on-Sea. By the way,

that's another charmingly unfrequented spot, or used to be, when it was an *appanage* of the nearest Cinque Port, with all sorts of old-fashioned privileges, queer customs, and quaint costumes.

Ah! I could tell you some stories about Moorgate-on-Sea, which would both interest and amuse your readers. But I won't. At all events, not now. My reminiscences of dear old Keinsolchberg—cheap old Keinsolchberg it was, *pension* four francs a day, including wine and lights, and as much as you liked of both—go back to when Larry Toole, not "Johnny" then, was a lank and lean stripling, dreaming only of "Hamlet" and the "Stranger;" while Harry Irving was a stout, podgy, undeveloped young fellow, whose highest aim (he had already started as an actor) was to play Peter Pipkin, or some such part in a roaring farce, in a comic red wig, with a rouged tip to his nose, and a suit of startling dittos. They were both devoted to the profession they had chosen, but in those happy holidays they had dismissed all thoughts of "flotes," "wings," "props," and every sort of "business"—their one idea being unlimited pleasure.

Our picnic party, on a bright Sunday morning (after Ben, not Webster, but Dizzy, had read us a short homily, more out of compliment to his friend Billy's high and dry church prejudices, than to any devotional instinct of his own), consisted of the two future eminent statesmen, 'the Serjeant,' then a first lieutenant on board H.M.S. *Minerva*. "Archie," at that time a Presbyterian schoolmaster, very much abroad, and heartily enjoying his vacation; Charley Hallé, who could scarcely speak any English, and who was serving his apprenticeship to a land surveyor in the eastern counties. Jack Millais, who, on the

decline of the P. R., was going in for flute playing in a London orchestra, and chubby young Palgrave, fresh from taking all the prizes as first Grecian at the Bluecoat School, and little dreaming that he would ever wield the pen of the Secretary of the Dramatic Authors' Society. Hallé had an immense influence, I should say, on his future career at this time, as had also John Hollingshead, or "Chronicle," as we used to call him, in allusion to his historical name, who was at that time cultivating a rich baritone in order to appear at the Opera, under Gye's management, during the ensuing season. It was at this very picnic that he caught the severe cold which cost him his voice, and entirely changed all his plans.

The only two of our jovial party unable to accompany us on this occasion were Larry Toole and Harry Irving, who, having had a hard run on the previous day with a chamois—when Larry had to carry his less stalwart companion over most of the precipices, and leap with him on his back, from point to point—were naturally very fatigued, and pleaded headaches as an excuse for not joining our excursion. They said they intended to remain in bed the entire day. Regretting their absence, we started for the mountains, our spirits rising in proportion as we ascended the heights. "Ben" and the "Serjeant" were our guides, while the rest of us took our share in the burden of hampers of food and wine which we were presently to enjoy.

I cannot stop to recall how we laughed, sang, talked, joked; how Billy played on a pocket triangle, and Ben danced a saraband; how the Serjeant shot a wild deer as it charged him with its dangerous antlers; how we lighted a fire then and there, while stalwart Harry Russell—"Cheer-boys-cheer-Russell"

as he was afterwards called—cut the carcase into quarters, and prepared some of the finest venison any of us ever had the pleasure of tasting before or since. Nor can I tell you how Siddy Bancroft showed us how to extract pepper from the common *blagonium* flower, and Johnny Hare ran up breathless from the lake, struggling with a gigantic turtle, which he deposited triumphantly in our midst, causing young Georgey Porgey (our nickname for Arthur Sketchley) to cry out, "Ha! the Hare and the Tortoise!" whereat the forests and hills rang with our laughter, as they may have done since to louder but not heartier shouts greeting a far better but not more spontaneous jest.

Georgey Porgey! what a fellow he was! A dashing young ensign in the something Foot, who had just sold out because they wouldn't order him off for active service to the Cape, and who, while meditating his next step of entering the navy as a volunteer midshipmite, had joined our vacation troupe at Keinsolchberg. Ah! he could tell you a tale—if he liked! Were we jolly Don Juans in those days? Bah! only full of life and spirits, and meaning no harm to anybody; though why Georgey was called out by old Don Espinosa, the father of the future celebrated dancer, was always a mystery to every one of us—except Labby and Murray (the "Guide," as we used to call him), who knew more than they cared to tell—and doubtless will remain so to the end. What end? Perhaps Georgey will explain in his forthcoming "Confessions of an Egg-Poacher." But, no matter. To continue.

"Let's sit here," cried Simmum (Sims Reeves that was to be), in his deep basso, which he, then a clerk to a Prothonotary in Milan, little thought would develop into his unrivalled tenor, "I'm awfully hungry."

"So am I!" shouted George Lewis. George the Second was the name he went by then, having officiated as Sketchley's "friend" on the occasion above referred to. At this time George the Second was the fastest, handsomest, and most dashing young ensign in Her Majesty's Household Brigade. Ah, me! he has long since cut the jack boots and holsters for the little room in Ely Place and the Courts of Justice everywhere.

The venison was being cooked. Savoury was the smell, as "Old Parr," as we used to call German Reed, from his being a long way the youngest of the party, took the spoon and stirred the pot.

"Uncork the champagne!" cried the Serjeant.

Pop! Fizz! It was done.

Then we regaled ourselves.

"Turtle first," said Ben, and we listened to the dictates of reason.

How we toasted one another in the intervals, and how we pressed Willy Gladstone for a speech, and how shy and obstinate he was, and refused to make one until he had had three glasses of champagne, when he volunteered a Swiss melody, accompanied by Ben on a curious one-stringed instrument. We drank and we drank; we toasted the turtle, we roasted Georgey, we toasted one another all round, and so filled up the interval of waiting for the venison, which, in spite of all the trouble bestowed on it, did take a far longer time than we had anticipated.

"We might have sent it home—I mean to the inn," I suggested.

"Oh yes!" cried Siddy B., "to have had it devoured by Harry and Larry."

"Besides," said Charley Hall's, "l'hotel est trop loin d'ici."

"True," replied Simmum, "we are a deuce of a way off here from everywhere."

"By jingo!" exclaimed George the Second.

"What?" we all cried.

"Why," he returned, "this is the very place where the brigands committed that robbery on the English travellers two weeks ago."

"Here or hereabouts," said the Serjeant, drowsily.

"*Himmel!*" growled Bizzy, who was too hungry to say much more.

"Let's have the venison and hook it," suggested Old Parr.

But wise counsels were not acceptable. However, wise or not, in a few moments more we had the smoking venison on our plates before us, and the reign of silence, of real, good, silent, munching enjoyment had commenced, when we were startled by a loud report.

Everyone looked up.

Was it the Serjeant's gun that had gone off by accident?

No: and the worst of it was that after he had shot the deer he had mislaid it somewhere.

"They're chamois hunters," said Jimmy Davison, romantically.

"No, they're not," shouted Billy G., making for a tree; "they're brigands!!!"

And before another word could be spoken, we were surrounded by a set of as ferocious-looking ruffians I have ever seen off a stage, or away from a foreign port.

Two picturesque villains, armed to the teeth, stepped into our midst. The taller of the two addressed us savagely in some strange mountain *patois* which we were utterly unable to comprehend.

"He means 'Your money or your life,'" Old Parr explained; adding, "let's give 'em the money and let 'em go."

"Go!" exclaimed George the Second. "Not they! their object's ransom. They won't let us off under a hundred apiece, and then they'll cut our ears off by inches if our friends only pay the money by instalments."

We felt ourselves turning pale. At least, I know I did, and the others looked it.

The sharp click of the carbines showed us there would be no time allowed for discussion.

The taller of the two ruffians aimed straight at Simmum, who thereupon produced a note. It was all he had.

We followed his example, protesting that we had offered them everything we possessed. The two diabolical wretches would not believe us.

In execrable French, which Charley Hallé politely translated, they informed us that to prove our sincerity, and as an evidence of our honesty and good faith, we must take off everything in order to show that we had no secret pockets. If, on any one's part, there should be the slightest attempt to deceive, that individual's last hour had come. And by way of amusement, click went the carbines.

When I say we were "surrounded," I must observe that only two other ruffians besides the captain and the lieutenant (as I supposed them to be) were visible; but above the bushes and from behind the trees appeared the well-known tall hats and ribands indicating quite clearly enough for all practical purposes, what would be our reception did any of us attempt flight in any direction. Urged by the clickings of the carbines, and the muttered oaths of the two brigands, we got as far as removing our shoes, coats, and flannel shirts, and were on the point of plaintively remonstrating in the name of humanity, with Charley Hallé as spokesman,

against proceeding to extremities, when the two brigands suddenly fired their carbines in the air (I thought I was shot in three places), threw up their hats, pitched away their beards and moustaches, and crying,

"Sold again!"

appeared in *proprios personis* as Larry Toole and Harry Irving!!

The old rascal of an innkeeper and his gardener had lent them the dresses, and the surrounding brigands were only hats on sticks, and nothing more.

We owed them one! But what a relief! What a carouse! How thoroughly the venison was done by that time! and how we roared when Harry Irving said, "We were as thoroughly done as the venison!" How heartily it was eaten! How drunk the jolly old landlord got, being wheeled home in a barrow (that had been used for bringing up the champagne) over the mountains at daybreak by his son, who was just sober enough to avoid the precipices, though he managed to lose the latchkey.

Ah, boys! weren't those joyous days?

When did this happen? What was the date? Does the place exist still? If so, where? And, lastly, is it all true? Better ask me at once, I reply, if *any* of it is true, than imply one single doubt of my general veracity.

All I have to say—for 'tis beneath me to explain—let those who doubt and those who trust me (bless them!) seek out dear old Keinsolchberg, let them stop at the quaint old hostelrie, and let them inquire of old Peter Bösch the Boatman (I forgot to say he was one of the brigands—only a "super," who had to carry back the wigs and carbines), and of Max Grünther, the cheery host of the *Schwein und Pfeifen*, as to the exact truth of every word I have here written. And if

their memories are good they'll give you all the information you require.

And so farewell all ! We may be happy, aye, and happier, yet. You don't believe me ? Ask Irving, ask Toole, ask W. E. G., ask Lord Beaconsfield, write to *The Times* ! I'll be bound you'll get the same answer everywhere.

Do you think that when I told you this tale, I hadn't something green in my eye ? Was it a Green Room ? And where should such a tale be told and believed if not in a Green Room ? And the greener the better. May it ever flourish ! *Semper virilis*.

Au revoir ! A Merry Christmas to you, gentlemen, and a Happy New Year, and when you project your next holiday tour, don't forget to look in the map for dear old Keinsolchberg, and call to mind the "Traveller's Tale."

AN ANECDOTE OR TWO OF CHARLES KEAN.

BY HENRY J. BYRON.



THE announcement of the death of Mrs. Charles Kean, almost simultaneously with that of the reproduction of "Leap Year," at the Haymarket—incongruous as the two events may seem—served, with me, to revive certain recollections concerning the lamented lady's husband, that may not be altogether without interest to my readers.

When I read that the lady was half-way between seventy and eighty, and that when I saw her in "Leap Year" she was slim and—well, sufficiently youthful, in appearance, at least, to play the heroine with effect, I

begin to fancy that the past is a fiction, or that I am really exceedingly old. It is, I suppose, over thirty years ago, and I was a boy ; but I was a boy who "knew his way about," and the way to the old three shilling Haymarket pit (oh, Bancroft !) in particular. Going to school, as I did, with the manager's sons, I heard, sometimes, little bits of theatrical news ; and I remember sympathizing with Kean in his aversion to "plush," which the author (Buckstone) at first suggested he should wear in the character of the footman hero. A compromise was effected, in the shape of trousers ; but there was certainly a stripe down the leg. Years after, when I had grown to man's—and alas ! manager's estate, (and, oh ! what a barren estate that proved), I reminded Kean of the "plush" episode. He chuckled a good deal, but didn't deny the soft—I may say the velvety impeachment.

Mr. Irving producing the "Corsican Brothers" at this particular moment suggests another link in the chain of memory in my case, and certainly I—as a thorough "Britisher"—felt an inward sense of comfort when I saw that Fechter, the original "Brothers," utterly failed to eclipse our "home-grown" produce, either in intensity, humour, or pathos. As to the fight, Fechter fenced like a fierce cat ; there was none of Kean's settled determination and fatal calmness.

Irving, no doubt, owes much of his success—his most deserved and legitimate success—to his resemblance to Macready and Charles Kean. His "You annoy me very much !" in "Digby Grant," was Macready over again ; and much of his "mannerism" is intensely Macreadyish. His "intensity" (for want of a better word, but it is not the one that quite expresses my meaning) is essen-

tially "Charles Keany." The combination is a happy one, and the public benefits therefrom; not that this has much to do with the heading of the article, says the reader. Quite so.

Kean met me (I intend keeping a story he told me for a *bonne bouche* at the close), in the town where, poor fellow! he played his last engagement, and I congratulated him on his success on the previous night. He had played Wolsey magnificently. I asked him if he had seen the papers.

"No," he replied; "I know exactly what they say—that I am not as young as I was, and that my wife is too fat for the sorrow-stricken Catharine. Why should I bother myself with that sort of thing?"

The following is a little-known fact, I fancy; for Kean was, as a rule, rather reticent upon the subject. One day, however, whilst speaking of the "Windsor Theatricals," he became enthusiastic, and told me, nearly in the following words, how he succeeded (apart from his own ability) in scoring in the character of Marc Antony.

"Of course, I should have preferred Brutus or Cassius. Certain circumstances, however, rendered it impossible. We three big guns were all to play together; that was the royal wish. Now Brutus gets a great pull." (In his more genial moments the tragedian used the phrase "pull," believe me.) "And," he continued, "so does Cassius. Marc Antony has one fine chance. Well, I feared I should probably be, not second, but, perhaps, third fiddle; and I own I felt uncomfortable. So I went to Charles Kemble. I said to that fine veteran, 'Sir, I am going to play Marc Antony at Windsor Castle, and Macready plays Brutus. I am anxious to do myself credit; and, to make assurance doubly sure, I want *you*, the famous Marc

Antony of modern times, to do me the very great favour of coaching me in your business, and sending me to the winning-post not a bad third; *but*——"

I refrain from writing the result, which, in Charles Kean's words, savoured in the very slightest degree of—well, professional gratification; for, I need hardly say, he did not actually *love* Macready. There never was an actor who was more mimicked, abused, and run after than Kean. Those who ought to have known better ignored his great talent, to have a fling at his physical peculiarities. It is very easy to say that, had he not been his father's son, the world would never have heard of him; but I firmly believe that his owning the name of Kean injured rather than assisted him. I have myself too often bitterly experienced the disadvantage of inheriting a name the possession of which is provocative of the second-hand sarcasm of small wits, and the more ponderous sneers of their betters. Had there been no Edmund Kean in the background, the son would have been spared half the cheap insolence to which he was for years subjected.

Before the production of "Richard the Second" (and this is the story I alluded to), Kean gave a "dress rehearsal" at the Princess's Theatre. I tell this story for two reasons—the one being, because I believe it has never appeared in print before; and, secondly, because it serves to show how very obstinate and inveterate certain folks can be when they choose to thoroughly dislike anybody. Charles Kean told it to me to illustrate the remarkable enmity which existed in certain quarters to all he did or tried to do. Such nonsensical opposition, and such malicious persecution—for in certain cases I could name it quite amounted to that—would not be tolerated now; but four or five and

twenty years ago it was a different matter, and Charles Kean was abused, caricatured, and generally ridiculed by a certain clique, who, however, had little or no effect upon the only critics an actor should consider—the Public.

Amongst the persons invited to the "Dress Rehearsal" was a critic who invariably abused Kean. It was the fashion, some years ago, for certain papers to take up a line of praise or abuse, and never deviate from it in the case of the fortunate or unfortunate object under notice. An influential morning paper never said a kind word of Dickens—indeed, it "pitched into" everything he wrote unmercifully. This sort of thing, with such a writer, would be an impossibility now-a-days. Public opinion would revolt against a palpable and inveterate injustice. But from such injustice Charles Kean suffered shamefully.

To return, however, to the critic. He was left (which I didn't mention) in a private box. To be all alone in a private box at that fearful infliction, a "Dress Rehearsal," is, I admit, a trying and a cruel thing. Fragmentary refreshments that smack of "the saloon" are totally inadequate compensation. Friendly assurances from unbending officials, that "it won't be so very late," fail to console those whose means of conveyance homewards are gradually lessening. The gentleman in question may have lived in the suburbs, or he may have been a constant frequenter of the Resurrection Club in Mildew Lane, and have felt the convivial hours were flying fast. Anyway, the Rehearsal went on, and at last the great scene—the entrance of Bolingbroke and the King into London was exhibited with all its life, movement, and splendour.

It has always been admitted that this pageant was one of the most realistic and

effective things ever seen upon a stage. It so happened that whilst everything was ready and complete for the rehearsal in the way of banners, costumes, etc., one trifling article had not been sent from the armourer's. This was the steel covering to go down the face of Richard's horse. Amidst so much that was complete and perfect, this very trifling matter would have been unnoticeable, or its temporary absence correctly accounted for by any one but the bilious gentleman in the private box. To him, however, it revealed a blot on the picture. Up to the present point he had been unable to find any fault, not even with the representative of the leading character. He had even condescended on one or two occasions to very *nearly* nod approval.

Charles Kean, when the scene was over, came to his friends in front to receive their hearty congratulations. Every one had something pleasant to say—most were enthusiastic. Kean, who was delighted, at length approached the gentleman in the box, feeling almost sure that even *he* could not well say anything in disparagement of the spectacle.

"Well, sir," said Kean, all smiles, "I hope we have succeeded in pleasing you."

"Humph!" growled the critic. "It's noisy enough, but you might have selected a horse *that hadn't got a white spot on his nose!*"

"Up to that moment," said Kean, in telling me the story, "I assure you nobody had noticed the white spot; and if the animal's vizard had been finished in time, my dear friend wouldn't have noticed it either."



THE STAGE WORLD.

By H. SAVILE CLARKE.

“LL the world's a stage,” the poet
Wrote in philosophic mood ;
Well one fancies he would
know it,

That the converse too holds good.
There are plots behind the curtain,
When the pageant's flags are furl'd ;
“All the world's a stage,” be certain—
All the stage a world !

When in tender situations,
Some young hero has to sue,
He will have his aspirations,
That the story may come true.
And the lady's eyes demurely
Dropp'd, hide many a tear impearl'd ;
“All the world's a stage ;” ah ! surely,
All the stage a world !

In a play some heart is broken,
When a villain has no ruth ;
Oft the words so smoothly spoken
Are too near the awful truth.
Hearts are human and unruly,
Real scorn, perchance, is hurl'd ;
“All the world's a stage”—too truly,
All the stage a world !

Some young life is full of anguish
In the drama, every scene
Shows a maiden, who must languish
For the love that might have been.
At the wings a father blesses
Yonder head so brightly curl'd ;
“All the world's a stage,” who guesses
All the stage a world ?

Fancy, friendship, fun, and fashion,
What the great world deigns to praise,
Love and loathing, pain and passion,
These are known behind the baize.
There the beauty's word supreme is,
There the dandy's stick is twirl'd :
“All the world's a stage ;” my theme is—
All the stage a world !

HARRY'S LUCK.

By JAMES FERNANDEZ.

ARRY W—— was a low comedian,
and as good an actor as he was a
man. There was a mutual love
between us, and whenever circum-
stances led me near to Harry, I always
availed myself of the opportunity of seeing
him. Thus it came that on a certain night,
in the Christmas week of 1861, being in the
vicinity of the Princess's Theatre, where
Harry was at that time acting, I resolved to
wait for him at the stage door, and express
to him my “compliments of the season.” I
“could not have come more opportunely,”
said he, “for I'm in *luck* ; this morn a pre-
sent from the North, a case of real ‘Glen-
livat,’ and this afternoon I *own*— But
come and see.”

I accompanied him to a neighbouring
tavern, where it appeared there had been that
day a raffle, and Harry had gained a prize—
a goose ! which, of course, was exhibited for
the gratification of the company, and was
christened in due form. After which cere-
mony, Harry took me aside, and said,

“Jim, we'll take the goose *home*. You
shall taste of my Glenlivat, and Mrs. W——
will be delighted to see you.”

"Agreed!" I answered, and took the bird. We left the house, got into a cab, and drove for Harry's home, which then was on the Surrey side. Nearing Bloomsbury Street, Harry remembered he'd a friend resided there, a taxidermist, to whom he'd like to show the bird. The cabman was instructed—stopped. We both got out; Harry knocked at the door. 'Twas opened.

"Is Mr. P—— within?"

"He *is*," replied a resonant and cheery voice. "Advance, Old Harry!"

We entered.

"The compliments of the season," said my friend. "I come on business, and" (holding up the goose) "want to know if you can stuff this bird?"

"Stuff!" roared P——. "Ay, with sage and onions, boy—true 'complements of the seasoning.'"

All laughed. Harry explained his luck. We drank to a merry Christmas, and then old P——'s face assumed a serious air, he shook his head, and said,

"Oh, that it should come to this! So good an actor, too! That I should live to see and say it!"

"What?" I asked.

"Why," thundered he, "my old friend Harry's *got the goose!*"

More laughter and chat until it was time to go. We left, with goose. Were in the cab.

"You'll dine with me on Christmas Day?" said Harry to his friend.

"Agreed!" replied that worthy. "And mind," bawled he, as the cab made off, "I shall tell all friends you've *had the goose.*"

Away we drove for home, Harry again assuring me that Mrs. W—— would be *delighted* to see me. However, that happiness was not yet to be mine; for passing

down Bow Street, Harry observed two actors entering the Opera Hotel.

"Why," said he, "there go M—— and S——."

"What!" exclaimed I, "old S——, the vegetarian theorist?—the fellow with the ridiculous ideas of human nature in connection with carrots and turnips?"

"Yes," answered Harry; "and M——, the disappointed tragic one, who's ever cursing his *bad* luck. He'll be glad to know of my *good* luck. Stop!" (to the cabman).

We got out, and, being told to bring the goose, I followed Harry into the inn.

"By all the gods!" declaimed our tragic friend, while pointing to the goose, "why bring that bird of ill omen here?"

"It is the harbinger of joy," said Harry, "a prize I've won this day."

"A Prize!" ejaculated M——. "I never won anything in my life, but once, and that was a waggon. What did I want with a waggon?"

"Thespis began in a cart, laddie," hinted S——.

"Pah!" interjected M——. "I'm the unluckiest of mortals. If I go into the country, I soon come back again. If I engage for a 'run,' the 'ghost don't walk.' If I take a 'benefit,' I find I've a lossfit. In short, I never make a 'hit,' save when I play at billiards, and then I'm so unlucky that, if I want to give a *miss*, I'm sure to *hit* the balls."

"Eat more vegetables, laddie," suggested S——.

"No," said Harry, "rather become a sharer in *my* luck, and dine with me on Christmas Day."

"I will! by all—but no. I must not make cocksure; for if I do some dire mischance is sure to happen to the goose."

"Nonsense!" laughed Harry; "you'll dine off him, and S——, too."

"What!" exclaimed that individual, "dine off that bile-engendering wretch! No, laddie, I will eat with you; drink with you; but I will not *goose* with you. Vegetables, I'm on. *Toujours des legumes. Ecce signum.* Observe the figure. Harken to the voice. How is it done? Vegetables, laddie, vegetables, from which we sprang, and to which we shall return. Jim (pointing to me) will be a turnip; you, Harry, will be a wurzel; and our Titianesque friend here, will be—a carrot."

"By all the gods!" roared M——, "if you dare suggest so foul a thing, I'll——"

Harry interposed, and called on them to drink unto each other's health; which being done, with other pleasantries, the time passed swiftly on. The clock struck—something, and I prevailed upon Harry to leave with me, M—— bearing the goose unto the cab, being "determined," as he said, "to throw no chance away." While S——'s passing words to Harry were, "To be sure to provide on the festive day vegetables galore."

The cab rolled off. We joked and smoked—I think we slept—until we reached our goal. Alighted, paid the fare, and cabby, he seemed satisfied, save that he "'oped we'd give a horder for the play."

"Oh, yes," laughed Harry, as we turned away, "and leave you something in our wills."

"Stop!" cried cabby, "are yer going to leave me *somethink* in my cab?"

"Eh! Good Heavens! Yes!"

We had forgotten the goose! The cabman took the lone bird out and gave it unto me, then drove in mirth away. We looked up at the house; the lights were out.

"I shall go home," I said.

"Not till you've tasted my Glenlivat," he

replied; "besides, my wife, who's doubtless in my room at back, will be *most charmed* to see you." He tried his key—he *tried* it very much, and then—he *kicked* the door. Oh lor! A barking and the rushing of, it seemed, a dozen dogs! "Hush! hush!" he cried above his breath, "Go down," and off they went.

"It's my three pets," he said, as the key turned in the lock, and we both stood inside. He closed the door; 'twas dark as pitch. "She's gone to bed," he said. "I must go up to get a light, and ask her for the keys."

He left me then, and presently I heard him speaking to his wife, saying—

"Darling, I want the keys of the cellaret; friend Jimmie is below."

"Is he?" was her indignant reply; "a thousand shames are his! How *dare* he keep you from your home? and *now* disgrace my house?"

I dropped the goose, and turned to find the door, as Harry, descending, called my name. I answered, "Let me out."

"No, you *must* taste my Glenlivat, and you *shall*. I know the way to accomplish it. Where's the goose?"

"He's somewhere here about," I sulkily replied.

"He must be found," he said.

We felt in darkness on the passage floor, and Harry got the goose.

"Now wait," said he, "you'll see the effect," and off he went again, but was soon heard exclaiming, "Give me joy, dear wife; I've won the prize, and, there, my darling, 'tis."

A sudden scream, and then—a thud upon the floor! He'd thrown the goose upon the bed, and she had hurled it off. And now the room shook o'er my head, a voice above said, "There!" and something then

came bumping down the stairs. I mentally exclaimed, "The goose!" The dogs rushed, barking, up the kitchen stairs, as I shrieked, "Pretty creature, down!" and Harry, hastening from above, commanded them be still. They did obey. The dogs were quiet, but not so Harry's wife. She was incensed at such a "*disgraceful* scene," and Harry said, "The fault was *hers*, she should have given the keys, not made him appear so inhospitable in the eyes of his dearest friend; a brother actor too, whom she'd now thrust forth into the cold and snow, without a bite or sup—especially the sup. There was a pause, and then I heard the rattle of the keys, and something like a kiss; and now my friend appeared, with light and keys. I followed to his room. He took from out the cellaret the much bepraised Glenlivat, and poured me out a glass.

"I'm very sorry," I began, "that Mrs. W——."

"Nonsense! my boy," he answered; "come to breakfast."

I shook my head.

"Tut! here's a merry Christmas, Jim." And he held his glass aloft. I rose, and, copying his action, said—

"Harry, the like to you."

We clinked our glasses, when—a noise, as of a kennel broken loose! All Harry's dogs were fighting down below. Down went our glasses. He clasped his hands, and cried, "I guess—the dogs have got the goose!"

He rushed away. There was a lull, and back he came to me, with something in his hand.

"What's that?" I asked, in wonderment.

He shook his head, and sighed. "My prize! Look at him. He's like the 'property' bird at the end of the farce of 'The Goose with the Golden Eggs.' Pah!" And

contemptuously he flung the ill-used *anser* to the ground.

I commiserated with the fallen wretch, and taking it up, said—

"Don't; you can easily wash him."

"Wash him! Perhaps. But I'm d—d if I eat him!" he replied. "He must not be seen by daylight here; so do me a favour, Jim—drop him over the bridge as you go home."

"Nonsense, Harry! Hark!" There was music outside—a cornet and a harp.

"The waits!" he cried. "By Jove! I'll give the goose to them—a glass of our Glenlivat, too. Come on."

He took the drink, and I the bird; then out, and called the men.

"Here; drink good cheer unto yourselves on Christmas Day!"

"Ah, sir!" the cornet answered, after drinking, and giving the glass to his chum, "Christmas Day ain't different to us, barring we may see a *joint*."

"And do you never see a goose? Look here!" and he took the bird fromme; "if I gave you this, what would you do?"

"Do!" replied the man; "why, go in a buster on Christmas Day."

"And you'll dine together?"

"Yes, his old woman and mine, and all the kids."

"Then," said Harry, giving his prize, "go in a buster on Christmas Day."

Once more the goose was placed upon the ground, the while the grateful fellows played the appropriate air of "He's a jolly good fellow," during which I heartily shook dear Harry by the hand, and, parting, said, "Good night."

And *good* night, sure, it was; for its remembrance evoked much hearty fun, though Mrs. W—— oft reproved our mirth. On

the last occasion of her doing so, Harry strove by argument to clear her prejudice away.

"You've an ill opinion of my *luck*," said he.

She answered, "Yes; for what *good* did it bring?"

"It brought *happiness*," was his reply; "for it gave jovial hours to Jim and me. It was the cause of my having many friends around me on Christmas Day; and—greatest joy—it provided a Christmas dinner for two poor families unused to the luxury of a good meal. If you don't call that *luck*—"

"I do, I do!" was quickly her reply; "but still——"

She paused, and looked at me.

"Still what?" he asked.

"Well, darling," she smilingly replied, "when you're *lucky* enough to win another prize, I hope you'll *send* it home."

TENNESSEE TOM.

BY WM. J. FLORENCE.

OW did you lose your finger, Tom?"

This was the question I put to an aged negro, as he made "his mark" on the wages-sheet one Saturday, when I was paying off the men in our principal dockyard at Quebec. Tom had been at the works for many years, and become a sort of foreman to a gang. He was a sober and faithful old fellow; and although he had signed the book Saturday after Saturday for a long time, I had never before noticed that the forefinger of his right hand was missing.

"Well, massa, I will tell you all about it some day. It is a long and cruel story, sah. I didn't kno' ye noticed it, sah. I kinder try to hide it; for it a'most kills me when anyone alludes to it, sah." And as the poor old fellow took his week's wages, and shuffled off, great tears rolled down his cheeks.

A few days later, I found Tom on the wharf, sitting in the shade of some bales of cotton. The men had finished their dinner, and Tom was taking his customary half-hour's rest.

"How are you to-day, Tom?" I inquired, as the old fellow rose to his feet to salute me.

"Pooty well, massa, thankee; but I can't stand the work as I used to, sah."

"Remember, Tom," said I, "you promised to tell me how you lost your finger. Come away from the cotton, and we'll have a pipe under the shed yonder, where we won't be disturbed."

I led the way, and Tom followed, loading his pipe. Once in the shed, he said—

"You see, massa, I was born a slave in Tennessee. Dat's why dey call me 'Tennessee Tom.' But how dese ere Canucks (Canadians) eber knew I was from Tennessee is mo' dan I can tell. I was born on a plantation. My fader was a blacksmith; and when I was a little piccaninny, I used to blow de bellus for him, so dat when I grew up I was put to de forge. When de ole man died, I was promoted to his place, and I was a mighty good smith, too, sah. You see, de blacksmith on de plantation has lots ob work to do, mending plows, waggons, farm tools, and all dat. Besides, sah, dey allus hab a cabin near de big house, and get from de massa a good many favours dat de common niggas don't get, sah. Well, I was a great favourite wid ebervy one on de plantation, and most ob all wid de ole massa; and I

was a han'some, strong boy, too, sah. Well, dere was a pooty bright mulatto gal at de big house. She was a servant, and waited on Miss Flo, de massa's favourite daughter; and somehow we used to meet ebery time I went up to de big house. We soon grew fond ob each oder, and one day I asked old massa to gib Lida to me for my wife.

"Well, sah, we was married plantation fashion, by a negro pa'son, a fellow slave. I can tell you I was a happy man den, sah. De next year and half was de sunshine ob my life, sah. Lida was de best wife in de world, and we had de pootiest little twins dat you eber saw, called Joe and Tom. Dey was de 'cutest little tings on de old plantation, and dey used to crawl round de cabin door while I watched dem from de forge opposite. You see, sah, my wife's duties took her to de big house, so dat myself and an old 'Mammy' had to watch dem babies most ob de time.

"Tings went on all right, sah, till one day Lida told me dat Miss Flo was goin' to be married to a gentleman from Cuba. We had seen dis gentleman from time to time visiting massa's family. He was a cross, proud fellow, and none ob us liked him, so dat when Lida told me ob de marriage, I felt as if something was goin' wrong. And sure enough it did go wrong, sah.

"A short time after Miss Flo's marriage ole massa died, and den all was crying and sorrowing on de plantation. De property passed ober to Miss Flo, and her Cuban husband commenced to take hold ob de management. He made us work twice as hard as we had eber done before. He put new overseers on de place, and built a large calaboose (jail) for de 'wicked niggas' as he called us. Dis calaboose was a large stone house, wid four cells lighted from

de top; and it had a large iron door. Our new massa was de most wicked man I ever did see. He hated us all, and used to kick, beat, and 'prison de slaves on de smallest excuse.

"Den, my darling Joe grew sick, and de poor little fellow began to fail. Lida had her work to attend to at de big house, so I had to run ober from de forge to tend de baby. In dat way I lost a deal of time, but I did love my babies so much dat my heart was a'most broke to see one ob dem drooping day by day. Little Tom seemed to know his broder was sick, for he would crawl over to de bed on de floor, lay his tiny hand on Joe's face, and in his baby way say, 'Poor little Joe.' I tell you, dat was mighty hard to bear, massa.

"One evening, just before dark, I was rocking de sick chile in my arms before de cabin door. I had done a hard day's work at de forge; and as I had been up most all de night before watching wid Lida at de little one's bedside, I was mighty tired and worn. Lida had promised to run down from de mansion to look after Joe, and I was wondering what was keeping her away so long, when I saw a lot ob de slaves around de big house in the distance. At first I thought there must be a fire or something ob dat sort, but soon one of de lads comes running ober to me, and 'Tom,' says he, 'Lida's in trubble.'

"'What's de matter?' says I.

"'Dey are goin' to take Lida to de calaboose,' says he.

"'What for?' says I.

"'Don't know,' says de lad; 'somet'ing has been lost or stolen, and dey say she's done it.'

"'Look 'ere, boy,' says I; 'jes you hold dis baby for a minute while I run ober and

see what's the fuss. Hold de poor fello' gently,' says I, 'cos he's mighty sick.'

"When I got to de big house, I found oberseer and our new massa gwine to de calaboose wid my poor Lida. Miss Flo stood crying on de steps.

" 'What's de matter, Miss Flo?' says I; 'what are de gwine to do wid poor Lida?'

" 'Oh, my poor Tom!' says she, wid de tears falling down her pooty face, 'one of my ear-rings has been lost, and my husband seems fixed in de belief dat Lida has stolen it. I don't believe it, Tom; but your massa's determined to put Lida in de calaboose, and dey are goin' to lock her up.'

" 'Oh, my dear Miss Flo,' said I, 'dey ain't gwine to 'prison dat poor gal; dey ain't gwine to put my dear Lida in de calaboose. She never stole nothin'; she too good. What's to become of my poor sick chile without a modder to look after him?'

" 'Ah, my poor Tom! I've tried my best to prevent Lida being taken away, but can't prevent it.' And Miss Flo wrung her hands in pity for me.

" 'Looker 'ere, massa,' said I, just as we got to de door ob de jail, 'don't put my Lida in dere. She ain't done nothin'. Dar's a sick baby in de cabin yonder dat wants a modder's care. Lida ain't stole nothin'. Dat ear-ring's lost somewhere about de house. It will be found agen. Please let her go.'

"The only answer I got was a crack across de face from de whip of de oberseer, as dey closed de iron door on my poor weeping wife.

"Wid my heart a'most broke, and de sting of dat heavy blow on my forrid, I went back to my cabin. I found Miss Flo dere, wid my poor sick baby in her arms. Together we watched that drooping little chile,

till jes before midnight de angels came and whispered 'it was time to go;' de Lord had called it home.

" 'Don't stop here no longer, Miss Flo,' said I. 'Go home, honey, and leave me wid de dead.' De dear lady didn't want to go, but after a while, weeping and crying, she left me, and went off in de darkness towards de big house. Den my heart giv' way, and I cried as if my heart would break, sah. Little Tom woke up, and stretching his arms over to his dead brodder, tried to wake him up. Oh! dat was too much for me, sah. I fell down on my knees, and was gwine to cuss, when I thought it was wicked, sah, for two wrongs didn't make one right.

"Suddenly the thought struck me dat I had made de iron door of de calaboose, and dat no oder man on earth could open dat door widout a key but me. Wrapping de dead chile up in Lida's shawl, and givin' it one kiss, I laid it on de bunk. I took de oder baby in my arms, rushed over to de forge, picked up a large hammer and chisel, and in de darkness crept towards de jail. It was an awful cold night, and as I held little Tom close to my breaking heart, de tears almost froze running down my cheeks. But I was strong in my purpose, sah, and savage in my despair. After two or three blows on de lock, de iron door of de calaboose swung open, and in a very short time I clasped Lida in my arms, once more a free woman.

" 'Take de chile, honey,' said I. 'We have but two hours between now and daylight; and we must make for de river before de alarm is given.'

" 'But whar's de oder—whar's little Joe?' said she.

" 'Dead, honey,' said I. 'Our chile is gone to clime de golden stair.'

“‘Oh, my God! My chile! My little Joe! Dead, dead!’ cried de poor creature, falling at my feet.

“‘Come, come. You want all your strength, Lida, to reach de river before day-light, and de cane brake is more than four miles across.’

“After a good hour’s tramp along de road, we entered a wood, and reached de cane brake, through which we had to pass before reaching de river. We could now hear de sound ob de horses following in de distance.

“‘Heaven help us now, Lida!’ cried I. ‘They’s after us. Courage, honey; courage!’

“On, on we struggled; and nearer, nearer came de sounds. Dey had traced us and entered de cane brake in hot pursuit. A few minutes more and dey was close upon us.

“‘We must hide here now,’ said I, ‘and if dey hab no dogs wid ’em dey will pass by.’

“So we plunged into de thickest ob de brake, Lida holding de baby to her breast to prevent his letting our pursuers know our whereabouts by his cry. We waited, holding our breath while dey searched right and left of us, some of dem coming just to where we was concealed.

“Most ob de party—for dere were five or six ob ’em—went on; but my Cuban massa, who had dismounted and left his horse at de entrance ob de cane brake, lagged behind searching every corner. He suddenly appeared, and wid de aid ob his bull’s eye lantern he discovered our hiding place.

“One moment more and he would have given de alarm, and called back de rest ob de party; but in de twinkling ob an eye I grasped him by de throat and stifled his cry. Quick as lightning, he whipped out ’his

bowie knife. Holding him tight by de neck wid one hand, I grasped de knife wid de oder. De sharp blade cut my finger to de bone, but I choked my wretched massa, till he turned over insensible under my grasp.

“De rest ob de party, having given up de chase, now returned, and passed quite close to where poor Lida and I lay trembling in de grass, near de unconscious man. My finger was a’most off, and my hand was bleeding fast. Using de bull’s-eye lantern, and sopping Lida’s shawl in de water, I tried to bring de Cuban to. But it was no use, and de river must be reached before daylight. So leaving him there, we once more fled towards de Mississippi.

“Just before daylight we reached de bank ob de river. Half-a-mile further up we saw a canoe tied near a woodman’s hut on de shore. We entered de canoe, and I paddled it across de river for dear life. For two days and nights we hid amongst de bushes. On de third day I hailed a raft ob coal boats, returning unloaded to de Ohio. Dey took us on board. Lida acted as cook, while I assisted as best I could till we reached Pittsburg. During de voyage poor little Tom was taken sick. Dat night in de cane brake had been too much for him, and he died ob a burning fever, calling for his brodder Joe.

“Lida, too, never seemed de same woman afterwards, sah. She pined away, and soon followed her little babies towards de golden shore. I was den all alone in de world. My finger never healed, and de doctors cut it off in de hospital at Pittsburg. I was afraid dat dey might come to me from Tennessee, for I didn’t kno’ whether I had killed my Cuban massa or not. So I made my way to Canada, a lonely, heartbroken man; and here I am still, sah, all dat is left of Tennessee Tom.”

A LEGEND OF BRIGHTHELMSTONE.

By JOHN HOLLINGSHEAD.



SEVENTY or eighty years ago—certainly within the recollection of our fathers—the leading notion of a Londoner's holiday was a visit to a place called a "Spa." There were Spas of various kinds, as there are watering-places of various kinds. Some were more fashionable and exclusive than others, and some were more distant from London than others, but they all had certain features in common. Of course, there was an Assembly Room—a place where people could meet, talk, flirt, and dance, and get as good an imitation of the bad air of a London ball-room as it was possible to get in the country or the suburbs. Of course, there was a master of the ceremonies, sometimes called a "beau," who ruled the mixed multitude of invalids and idlers according to his ability and influence. But the chief characteristic of a popular Spa was a spring or well of more or less nauseous water, which was supposed to be remarkable for certain health-giving qualities. The more filthy this water was to the taste, the more people believed in its efficacy, and the more they flocked to the lucky "Spa" that was so fortunate as to possess this treasure. This water may have been at Bath or Cheltenham, at Tunbridge Wells or Leamington; but it sometimes favoured places as near London as Hampstead, or as unromantic as Islington or Clerkenwell. When Lady Mary Wortley Montagu had the megrims, she took a coach to Islington, to "take the waters;" and the proprietors of Sadler's Wells, when they wished to draw fashion to the neighbourhood of St. John Street Road, prevailed

upon the celebrated Beau Nash—the so-called King of Bath—to accept a starring engagement as their master of the ceremonies. Everywhere one heard of the weak and idle washing the inside of their systems with "natural physick," sweetened with a little music and dancing; but nowhere of that fashionable pickling of the outside of the human system, which has now taken the place in England of the other mania. Margate in those days was known and patronized by holiday makers, but not because it was immediately opposite the North Pole, and had a beach washed by star-fish, floating corks, sea-weed, and salt-water. Margate was a "Spa," and behaved as became a place of medicinal importance. It turned its back upon the North Pole, the fresh air, and the scummy sea. Its best houses were built in a solid square, with their faces gazing admiringly towards the Assembly Rooms. That no person might be kept away from this favoured fountain of health by any horror of the briny element, the papers of the time (they were not very numerous) announced that every house was thoroughly protected from the sea air, and that the virtues of the Margate spring had been thoroughly tested by every doctor of eminence. Our fathers and grandfathers flocked to Margate, washed themselves inside, but never outside, and felt supremely happy.

Sea-bathing was hidden in the womb of time, and would probably have long remained hidden, but for the cleverness of a doctor at a rival fishing-town on the South Coast, now known as Brighton, but then called Bricht-helmstone. This doctor was not altogether uninterested in many acres of chalky land on the sea-shore, which was not quite a treasure to the agriculturist. He argued that Bricht-helmstone was the nearest watering-place to

London, and if he could find a plan of drawing London to the South Coast, his land, which would not grow corn or carrots, might soon be covered with houses. He was not long in finding such a plan. He published a pamphlet, in which he proved that the cure for all fleshly ills, and the sure way of reaching a ripe old age that would put Methuselah's in the shade, was to pickle yourself daily in salt water, and particularly in the salt water of Brighthelmstone. Those were days in which people had time to read, and the pamphlet was read, and believed in. Brighthelmstone was handy—the drive to it was pleasant—the place was cheerful; and London was conquered. Pickling became the order of the day. Not to have pickled yourself was held to be the sign of a low-bred person—a Radical, a non-believer in Church and State, and probably an atheist. The doctor was rewarded for his ingenuity. His land was taken by builders; he became rich, and had the honour of sitting thrice as mayor for the town he had so greatly benefited.

AN ACTOR'S NOTE-BOOK.

BY HENRY H. HOWE.

OU ask me to say something of my experiences during my career. I have found it so difficult to do so without an extensive use of the personal pronoun, that I almost gave it up in despair. When I tell you that I was brought up until the age of fifteen entirely among Quakers, and rather of the strictest as to forms and observances among them, you will understand that I had not the least know-

ledge of what a theatre was like. My notions being formed only by seeing the outside of a travelling booth at a fair, you can imagine my bewilderment and wonder when I tell you the first theatre I was ever in, was Drury Lane, on the occasion of "Edmund Kean" playing Richard III. I went in half-price; the brilliant sight of a crowded theatre full of fashion and beauty, seemed to me a sort of paradise. When the curtain rose on the commencement of the fourth act, with Kean as Richard, on the throne, with all the courtiers about him, I was entranced; his wonderful impersonation completed my enthralment. I resolved from that time to follow the profession.

At that time Mr. Kean resided at the Richmond Theatre, of which he was the lessee, and used to act there two nights a week. I then lived at Isleworth, as I do now, and called on Mr. Kean. He was astonished to see a youth in a Quaker's garb soliciting an engagement; he was evidently much amused, asked me if my parents knew of my intention: when he found they did not, he strongly advised me to give up the notion. Among other things, he asked me if I was prepared to starve; he told me he had several times in his life been eighteen and twenty hours without food. He was just going to Twickenham Ait, and asked me to go with him, as his boat was waiting for him. He had five dogs with him that seemed wonderfully attached to him; he gave me all the good advice he could think of to dissuade me from my inclination, and parted with me under the impression he had succeeded. His good counsel was effective for about a year, until one night I was in the pit of Covent Garden Theatre, when a Mr. Otway, a well-known amateur of that day, was acting Jaffier. I was young and foolish and hissed him. A

gentleman next to me politely asked me not to hiss him, as the poor man was doing his best, and said that if I knew the difficulty of walking and speaking at the same time, I should have pity on him. I soon found my neighbour was an amateur actor, and was going to play Shylock at Smithson's private theatre, in Catherine Street; and he represented that if I liked, by paying seven shillings and sixpence, I could have the part of Antonio. This was my first essay. I remember rather an amusing circumstance that occurred during the performance, when Shylock tried to enter his house, after his scene with Gobbo, as frequently happens in carelessly-conducted theatres, he found the door was fastened on the inside; after shaking the whole scene, a wag in the pit called out, "Go round the back way, old bloke, or you'll have the house down." This raised the first laugh, which lasted at intervals through the piece.

But once having begun, I was determined not to turn back. My first engagement was at the Victoria Theatre, where an accident happened that might have been fatal to me. A new melodrama, called "Richard Plantagenet," by J. Haines, was produced, in which horses were introduced. They were hoisted up outside the building to the second floor, where they entered through the window, they were then arranged on a platform, and descended a brake to near the footlights. The owner of the horses led the procession in a suit of brass armour, which with the horse was a great weight, and when the poor animal stepped upon the stage, the flooring gave way; the poor beast was killed on the spot, and the man only lived a few hours. I was on horseback following; the instinct of my horse, unassisted by any skill of my own, saved my life by jumping clean

over the chasm. By-the-by, the brass armour reminds me of a strange dilemma I was in during the same engagement. The Brass-founders had a benefit at the Victoria, on which occasion I had to recite a poetical address, screwed up in a splendid suit of real brass armour; they were twenty minutes getting me into it. I delivered my address with my arm on a pedestal to support me, to which I was carried. When the curtain dropped, they could not get me out of the armour in consequence of some screw breaking, and I was obliged to be put into a hackney-coach and taken to a workshop in the Borough to be released.

I had another narrow escape at the Windsor Theatre, playing Miles Bertram in the "Wreck Ashore." One of the characters in the piece had to present a gun with a threat to shoot him. This was at rehearsal, but strange to say, the gun was loaded—of course, only with powder. The men pulled the trigger without being required to do so, and I was shot in the eye, and laid up for five weeks in the uncertainty of not knowing if I should ever see again. It was in the first year of Her Gracious Majesty's coming to the throne; she was in Windsor at the time, and made repeated inquiries about me, and gave orders that I was to have anything I required from the Castle; every morning fruit was sent from the garden, a benefit was got up for me on my recovery, when I received from the Queen substantial proof of her sympathy.

Another very remarkable, although trifling piece of good luck occurred to me, and was so singular, that perhaps it is worth recording. I lodged at the corner of Southampton Street during the early part of my first engagement at the Haymarket Theatre. I had been writing at home just before leaving for acting; when

I arrived at the theatre, I discovered, as I thought, I had left my bunch of keys at home. Instead of breaking open my dressing-case, I saw I had just time to run back to Southampton Street, when I found I had not left them there; feeling in my pocket I discovered a hole quite large enough to have allowed them to fall through. I gave up the keys, of course, as lost, and was running back, and without thinking of them, kicked against my lost keys as I was crossing Bedford Street for the third time; hundreds of people had, of course, crossed the street during the time, and my property had not been seen—a strange coincidence.

This puts me in mind of a funny story Mrs. Glover used to tell. When acting in North Shields, starring in the Queen in the "Battle of Hexham," in the scene where she and her two children are met in the forest by the would-be assassin, the person who acted it had forgotten his sword; he discovered his dilemma, and whispered to the prompter, who procured a sword for him and slyly thrust it on at the wing, at which he exclaimed, "A strange coincidence, a sword in a tree," and proceeded to despatch the children. This so tickled the risible faculties of the audience as well as Mrs. Glover, that the whole act was played in dumb show.

Mr. Macready once told me a good anecdote, speaking of the annoyance he was sometimes subjected to from the ill-temper of country actors, when they were displaced by a star. A gentleman, who felt annoyed at his having to play Laertes after having been the stock Hamlet, in the graveyard scene, when he jumped into Ophelia's grave, disappeared altogether, and ran out of the theatre, an incident that of course stopped the play. Macready told me this while I was acting Horatio with him, during which performance

he perpetrated a joke himself. At that time we had a very handsome man, very proud and vain of his own appearance, and whenever a chance occurred, was fond of showing as much of his throat as possible; and when Hamlet says to Horatio, "That is Laertes, a very noble youth," Macready whispered, "God forgive me, look at his filthy neck." This was his retiring engagement, the last time but one he ever played Hamlet; he remarked he had never played it so well in his life. He was evidently counting very much on the end, for he generally made a remark, "Thank heaven, the last time but five, or four," as the case might be.

Macready was very kind to me and helped me in my professional studies very much. On one occasion, when Mr. Hudson and myself had lunched with him, he was speaking of the difficulty of laughing naturally on the stage, and suggested our trying his plan, which was to inflate the lungs as much as possible at the commencement, and gradually empty them in the action of laughing. He asked us to try. The scene was so ludicrous, to see all three in the same action, that Hudson and myself shrieked with real laughter. He was delighted, thinking it was all from the art he had explained. He had a great sense of the ludicrous. Buckstone was so irresistibly comic that Macready asked him to give up the gravedigger, because he could not refrain from laughter at Buckstone's expression of face as he handed him the skull. He had the same dread of his playing one of the witches in "Macbeth." His stage manager, Mr. Bartley, told me an anecdote of Fawcett, who was a great gravedigger. Fawcett said, "I shall have much pleasure in giving up the gravedigger to you, Mr. Bartley. I am always delighted when I can encourage talent in the young; you shall play the first grave-

digger in future, although it is one of my favourite parts ;” and as he was turning away he said, “Take care of the draught, under the stage, there is a wind there enough to blow your liver out.”

A curious incident occurred at the Haymarket Theatre in reference to myself. One night a very plainly-dressed elderly lady, in the stiffest and primmest costume of Quaker bonnet and gown, asked a policeman who was standing at the box door, “Haven’t thee one of our people employed here?” The policeman handed her to Frederick Webster, who then was the acting manager. She repeated the question to him, and he, knowing I was once a Quaker, replied, “Yes, we have.” “Oh, then, will thee let me just look at him for a minute or two; I may as well tell thee that I don’t approve of this sort of thing at all, but I should so much like to see what he does. I promise thee not to stay.” He referred her to the box money-taker. “How much have I to pay?” “Five shillings,” said the man, the price then. “Oh dear, that is a great deal of money; I really don’t think I ought to spend such a sum on such folly. But I do so much want to see what he does, that I don’t mind giving thee half-a-crown just to look at him for five minutes.” But they would not let her in, and she went away without seeing me; but I think the price raised her opinion of my efforts, for when she told me of her endeavour to see me, she said, “She thought I must be employed in something useful, or people would not pay so much to see me.”

My utter want of knowledge of anything relative to the mechanical part of my profession, led me into a dilemma once, when announced to play Othello at the Gravesend Theatre. I had read in Leman

Rede’s “Road to the Stage,” that the black for a Moor was burnt cork, which I actually put on hot from burning it at a candle; when I went to wash, after the piece was over, I had scarcely any skin left on my face, and was obliged to return to London the next morning.

It is astonishing what a recollection some people have of the sound of a voice. One day, a few years ago, having just missed the train at Waterloo Station, I, having a friend with me, went into a tavern in the Waterloo Road to wait for an hour. In the parlour was seated a blind man, who after some minutes said, “I beg your pardon, but am I not listening to the voice of Mr. Howe, who I saw years ago at Covent Garden Theatre, with Mr. Macready?” The poor man had not heard my voice for years, but recognized it; he had lost his sight since he last heard it. Another instance. Going over Keston Common in the dark, I asked the way of a gentleman on horseback, who said, “I think I recognize a very familiar voice,” mentioning my name.

The first entire company from one theatre that ever went the round of the provinces, was the Haymarket company, in 1843. Webster, who was then the Haymarket manager, was so pleased at our trying to do something during a vacation, that he told us he would come and play for us in every fresh town the first night, to show that we were really his company; and he did so, and a very profitable speculation it always turned out, although we never played more than five nights a week, leaving the Saturday always as a holiday, wishing to make the outing as much a pleasure as profit. But the first vacation Mr. Buckstone had, after he was manager, he made us go with him as the responsible manager, and made for several years thousands by the trips.

There is much less practical joking among actors than there used to be. One or two instances, perhaps, are worth relating, on account of their strange ingenuity. Mr. John Lee, the original Jingle at the Strand Theatre, was engaged to star in that character at the Old Standard, Shoreditch. He was rather troublesome at rehearsal, and to gratify their revenge one of the company took a fishing-rod well hooked into the flies, and when Jingle falls on his knees in a paroxysm of inflated love, the wag gently lowered it on to the head of the lover, and whisked his wig up into the flies, leaving poor Mr. Lee perfectly bald, for he always wore a wig in private, having lost his own hair. While I was at Covent Garden playing in a farce, in which the whole plot rested on producing the key of a garden gate at a precise moment, I found that the rogues had cut out the bottom of my pocket; of course, the key was not forthcoming, and the culprits left me in my trouble to get out of it how I could.

Perhaps the greatest practical joke ever practised, was perpetrated by Abbott upon Miss Stephens, the celebrated prima donna. She was a simple, kind-hearted woman, always full of sympathy for any distress. Abbott, during the rehearsal of "Guy Mannering," pretended to be very unwell, upon which Miss Stephens, as usual, appeared to be very concerned. He told her he was to undergo an operation that afternoon, of a very painful nature; she endeavoured to persuade him not to think of acting the part of Colonel Mannering on the following night. He told her the doctor assured him he would be able to do so after the operation was once performed. The next evening, on his way to the theatre, he called at a butcher's and bought a kidney, and when he led Miss Stephens to the front of the stage to sing the

solo in the finale, he placed the kidney in her hand, and told her that was what he had taken out of his side the day before; and she actually sang the music with the kidney in her closed hand, as she had no opportunity of dropping it. I remember seeing Miss Stephens—in fact, all the witches in "Macbeth"—dressed in white muslin short petticoats, with satin shoes and sandals, and a Mother Shipton's conical hat; it seems almost impossible, knowing how differently things are done now.

Actors have at times the most extraordinary notes sent to them from the outside public. I remember, while acting at the Haymarket, in the "Vicar of Wakefield," playing the part of a needy swell, I wore a pair of Berlin gloves; after the performance, I received this note, "Sir, if you wear those d—— gloves to-morrow night, by —— I'll shoot you,—Yours, Lt. Blake." I compromised the matter, and wore one only, carrying the other, and I heard no more. While at Covent Garden, I had a Bible sent me with these words, "Study this as closely as you have your Shakespeare, and you will be the better man." While playing in "Wild Oats," at the Haymarket, Mr. James Wallack being the Rover, an old gentleman in the corner of the dress circle next the stage had risen from his seat, and was putting on his great-coat and comforter very deliberately, when Wallack addressed him, being always very much annoyed if the audience moved before the piece was ended, which is often the case, so that the last few lines are inaudible. "I beg your pardon, sir," said Wallack, "but the piece is not quite over." The old gentleman was quite prepared, and replied, "Thank you, Mr. Wallack, but I've had quite enough of it." This turned the laugh against Wallack. The Haymarket

was at one time noted for its late performances while Mr. Morris was the lessee, before Webster's time, he was standing at the prompt entrance, and seeing in the private box opposite a liveried servant trying to wake his master, Mr. Morris said to Frederick Vining, who was playing in the last piece, it being then past twelve o'clock, "Look at that gentleman fast asleep, and his servant trying to wake him." "Yes, I see," said Vining, "he has brought his master the latch-key, to tell him the servants won't wait up any longer for him."



"THE NEIGHBOUR'S BAIRN."

By HENRY IRVING.



AT the present time, when the progress of realism is marking an epoch in stage management, a little special attention may not inopportunately be given to the humanitarian branch of stage realism—that of food. The old days of pasteboard pie and wooden chickens are gone from good theatres—let us hope, for ever. The real "veal and ham'er" in the interesting reproduction of "Dot" at the Folly, was quite a success, and brought the dinner-hour instincts of all present to the aid of histrionic effect. I was much struck, not long since, by the thoughtful consideration manifested by a charming young lady in a successful opera bouffe, who took care that the vast amount of real bread, which she had cut so gracefully, was ultimately distributed to that portion of the French army in the rear, who seemed to have been hitherto inadequately supplied with rations, and to whom the nightly addi-

tion to their present emolument may have been of some little service.

When, a year ago, we produced at the Lyceum, as a first piece, the old Scotch drama of "Cramond Brig," the various members of the company playing in the piece had full choice of wherewithal to wash down their "heed and harrigles"—(of which, by the way, over a hundred were consumed during the run),—and the miller's supper became a nightly jollity, except, perhaps, to the Scotch nobility and the king's huntsmen, who, with watery mouths and eager eyes, crowded the wings, forbidden by the irony of dramatic fate to enter upon the scene until the supper had been cleared away.

This piece reminded me of an incident which came under my notice, a good many years ago. In the off season of a large provincial theatre, in which I was a stock actor, I took an engagement at a small town, then known as one of the most thriving seaports of the North. The salary was little; the parts were long, and there was not much opportunity for gaining renown. However, it was better than remaining idle, as, at the worst, the amount of debt to be accumulated was minimised. The manager was not a bad fellow, and having been a good actor in his time, was only too glad to be surrounded by a class of actors whose services he could only obtain by the opportunity afforded by the bright summer—in those palmy days the darkest and wintriest season to the airy comedian or the thoroughly legitimate tragedian. Our opening bill consisted of "Cramond Brig," "Lord Darnley," "Wallace, the Hero of Scotland," and "Gilderoy, the Bonnie Boy," in all of which I played, besides contributing my share in the National Anthem, which was right loyally and loudly sung by the entire strength of the company. After

the rehearsal of "Cramond Brig," our jolly manager said, "Now, boys, I shall stand a real supper to-night; no pasteboard and parsley, but a real sheep's head, and a little drop of real Scotch." A tumult of applause.

The manager was as good as his word, for at night there was a real head well equipped with turnips and carrots, and the "drop of real Scotch." The "neighbour's bairn," an important character in the scene, came in and took her seat as usual beside the miller's chair. She was a pretty, sad-eyed, intelligent child of some nine years old. In the course of the meal, when Jock Howison was freely passing the whiskey, she leaned over to him and said, "Please, will you give me a little?" He looked surprised. She was so earnest in her request, that I whispered to her, "To-morrow, perhaps, if you want it very much, you shall have a thimbleful."

To-morrow night came, and, to my amusement, she produced from the pocket of her little plaid frock a bright piece of brass, and held it out to me. I said, "What's this?"

"A thimble, sir."

"But what am I to do with it?"

"You said that you would give me a thimbleful of whiskey if I wanted it, and I do want it."

This was said so naturally, that the audience laughed and applauded. I looked over to the miller, and found him with the butt end of his knife and fork on the table, and his eyes wide open, gazing at us in astonishment. However, we were both experienced enough to pass off this unrehearsed effect as a part of the piece. I filled the thimble, and the child took it back carefully to her little "creepy" stool beside the miller. I watched her, and presently saw her turn her back to the audience and pour it

into a little halfpenny tin snuff-box. She covered the box with a bit of paper, and screwed on the lid, thus making the box pretty watertight, and put it into her pocket.

When the curtain fell, our manager came forward and patted the child's head. "Why, my little girl," said he, "you are quite a genius. Your gag is the best thing in the piece. We must have it in every night. But, my child, you mustn't drink the whiskey! No, no! that would never do."

"Oh, sir, indeed I won't; I give you my word I won't!" she said, quite earnestly, and ran to her dressing-room.

"Cramond Brig" had an unprecedented run of six nights, and the little lady always got her thimbleful of whiskey, and her round of applause. And each time I noticed that she corked up the former safely in the snuff-box. I was curious as to what she could possibly want with the spirit, and who she was, and where she came from. I asked her, but she seemed so unwilling to tell, and turned so red, that I did not press her; but I found out that it was the old story—no mother, and a drunken father.

Still, it was strange; what could she want with the whiskey—a child like her? It could not be for the drunken father. I was completely at fault. I took a fancy to the little thing, and wished to fathom her secret, for a secret I felt sure there was. After the performance, I saw my little body come out. Poor little child! there was no mother or brother to see her to her home. She hurried up the street, and turning into the poorest quarter of the town, entered the common stair of a tumbledown old house. I followed, feeling my way as best I could. She went up and up, till in the very top flat she entered a little room. A handful of fire glimmering in the grate revealed a sickly

boy, some two years her junior, who crawled towards her from where he was lying before the fire.

"Cissy, I'm glad you're home," he said. "I thought you'd never come."

She put her arms round him, laid the poor little head on her thin shoulder and took him over to the fire again, trying to comfort him as she went.

"Is the pain very bad, to-night, Willie?"

"Yes." A sadder "yes" I never heard.

"Willie, I wish I could bear the pain for you."

"It's cruel of father to send me out in the wet; he knows how bad I am."

"Hush! Willie, hush! he might hear you."

"I don't care! I don't care! I wish he would kill me at once."

The reckless *abandon* of the child's despair was dreadful.

"Hush! hush! he is our father and we mustn't say such things!" This through her fast-falling tears. Then she said, "Let me try and make the pain better."

The boy took off his shirt.

The girl leaned over and put her arms round him, and kissed the shoulder; she then put her hand into her pocket and took out the snuff-box.

"Oh, Willie; I wish we had more, so that it might cure the pain."

Having lighted a dip candle, she rubbed the child's rheumatic shoulder with the few drops of spirit, and then covered up the little thin body, and, sitting before the fire, took the boy's head on her knee, and began to sing him to sleep.

I took another look into the room, through the half-open door; my foot creaked; the frightened eyes met mine. I put my finger on my lips and crept away.

But, as I began to descend the stair, I met a drunken man ascending—slipping and stumbling as he came. He slipped and stumbled by me, and entered the room. I followed to the landing unnoticed, and stood in the dark shadow of the half-open door.

A hoarse, brutal voice growled: "What are you doing there?—get up!"

"I can't, father; Willie's head is on my knees."

"Get up!"

She gently laid the boy's head on the floor, pillowing it in her little shawl, and stood up.

"Father, Willie is very sick! you ought to try to get him cured."

"Shut up. If I hear another word, I'll make you and him too keep yourselves quiet." And the brute flung himself on his bed, muttering to himself in his drunken semi-oblivion—"Cure him, indeed! Not if I know it. That's not the way to get the money; his cough is worth a lot alone. Cure him, indeed! Not likely!"

The black-hearted scoundrel!

The girl bowed her head lower and lower.

I could not bear it. I entered the room. The brute was on the bed already in his besotted sleep. The child stole up to me, and in a half-frightened whisper said, "Oh, sir, oughtn't people to keep secrets, if they know them? I think they ought, if they are other people's." This with the dignity of a queen.

I could not gainsay her, so I said, as gravely as I could to the little woman, "The secret shall be kept, but you must ask me if you want anything."

She bent over, suddenly kissed my hand, and I went down the stair.

The next night she was shy in coming

for the whiskey, and I took care that she had good measure.

The last night of our long run of six nights, she looked more happy than I had ever seen her. When she came for the whiskey she held out the thimble, and whispered to me with her poor, pale lips trembling, "You need only pretend to-night."

"Why?" I whispered.

"Because—he doesn't want it now. He's dead!"

OLD AND YOUNG STAGERS.

By WALTER LACY.

IN a sceptical age it is scarcely surprising that a thoughtless young stager should occasionally be found disparaging the great actors of the past. Fortunately for poet, sculptor, and painter they have in print, on canvas and in marble, enduring proof of a Milton, a Michael Angelo; and by analogy the actor of to-day may modestly concede merit to "the poor player that strutted his hour" on the olden stage.

Some years after Charles Kemble, the Faulconbridge and Mirabel of his day, had ostensibly retired from the boards whence I imbibed inspiration in my salad days, sitting in the great pit of the comfortable old Theatre Royal in Covent Garden, a self-sufficient young stager had the temerity to assert at a convivial meeting that "the public wouldn't stand Charles Kemble if he were to come back;" on which a tall, popular author rose like a steeple, and bending with stately grace towards the rash youth, said, in his quiet way, "Sir, if you were to go to bed and dream that you saw Charles Kemble as he was in

his prime, when you woke in the morning, you'd cut your throat!"

At Her Majesty's command Charles Kemble did "come back" to "witch the world with noble" acting; and two amusing tributes to his talent were differently rendered by the crack tragedian, and by the favourite comedian of the day. I was chatting with the charming actresses in the green-room of the Haymarket at the time "Much Ado About Nothing" was in rehearsal for Macready's Benedick, when the "eminent tragedian," who could only be got to admit that the Kembles were—a—very—handsome—family, came suddenly upon us in evident chagrin, with, "Have you heard? The Queen wants to see Charles Kemble act again; great heaven! had her Majesty desired to see Miss Kelly—or—any one of genius, but to call back a man—whose ability may be summed in a word—manner, nothing but—*manner*." Ah, I remarked, as he rushed back to stop the rehearsals, not caring to commence a controversy, "That's just what Mr. Macready wants for Benedick!"

The night "that gallant spirit had aspired the clouds," Charles Mathews rushed into the cozy old Garrick Club in King Street, and addressing that old and respected member, Mr. Francis Fladgate, exclaimed, "Oh! my dear Frank, I've had such an escape! I was going to play Mercutio myself, and I've just seen Charles Kemble play it! what an escape I've had."

Mathews, in my humble opinion, was a light comedian without pretence to pathos; his style rapid, his delivery crisp and telling, faultless in figure, in dress exact. To compare him with Kemble would be like comparing the façade of St. Bride's Church in Fleet Street with the dome of St. Peter's at Rome.

The one was a gentleman seen to advantage in Sir Charles Coldstream, the other a nobleman at home in Lord Townly. I remember my dear wife telling me that while rehearsing Rosalind, after her success in "The Carnival of Naples," which was written specially for her *début* at the Theatre Royal, Covent Garden, an old master of deportment came on the stage, to whom she was introduced by Charles Kemble in these words:—

"Miss Taylor, permit me to introduce Monsieur Deshayes. My dear young lady, to this great man I owe all of grace I ever possessed; for years I moved only under his direction," proving, to paraphrase a couplet of Pope—

"True ease in acting comes from art, not chance,
As those move easiest who have learned to dance."

There is a correlative anecdote characteristic of the Kemble capacity for work. At the first introduction John Kemble asked Deshayes how long it would take his brother to acquire perfect grace of action. The Frenchman replied with a shrug, "Twenty years, perhaps." Charles Kemble, arching his brows, said calmly, "Well, we'll begin." The matchless Romeo, after taking the dying hand of so many Mercutios, from the "Starry Lewis" to "Gentleman Jones," first taught the town how the part should be performed, when his famous daughter Fanny, whose Shakespearian readings shed the radiance of a glorious sunset round the Kemble name, made her *début* as Juliet.

As the best Romeo proved also to be the best Mercutio, the excitement was great regarding his Pierre, when he resigned Jaffier, on his daughter's appearance as Belvidera. His gallant appearance elicited tumultuous applause; but, alas! the light voice, so charming in comedy and exquisite in the description of the Fairie Queen Mab, made us

miss the thunder of Young, who was great by his absence. These admirable actors were best seen together. In King John, Young's deep tones in the single syllable words "cast—thine—eye—on—yon—young—boy," sounded like the tolling of a bell for the child's death. Charles Kemble, as Faulconbridge, came into Angiers with the "indolent grace" of a tawny lion emerging from an African jungle, as if the imagination of his mother had been imbued with his royal father's hand to paw encounter with the king of the forest; his light chaff of Austria was kept well within the bounds of high comedy. In my pastoral days, when ambitious of playing the Bastard, the pivot of my success in after years, Charles Kemble gave me this invaluable hint, "Take care, Lacy, Faulconbridge is very near being a bully," and I might add, for the benefit of young actresses, Constance may easily degenerate into a virago.

Macready achieved renown in the Roman citizen Virginius, but damaged his reputation by attempting Coriolanus. Macbeth was his best part in Shakespeare; but he shone with conspicuous splendour as manager and actor in Cymbeline, cast in unprecedented strength, marvellously mounted, and acted to admiration. The Imogen of Helen Faucit, now Lady Theodore Martin, in delicacy of conception and power of execution, soared high above criticism; while Macready's Iachimo, whether as the rose-crowned boaster in Rome, the plainly-attired "noble stranger" in Britain, where his eager gallantry is chilled by the presence of the chaste Imogen, or the repentant soldier after the battle, in classic pose, action, and utterance, exhibited the actor's art to perfection.

Apart from Shakespeare, Macready's most important part was Werner, which was

matched, however, by the Ulric of James Wallack, a master of his craft, whose essential quality of manliness was embellished with every accomplishment that can grace an actor. He was unapproachable in Romantic Drama, although his laurels were hotly contested by Osbaldistone at the Surrey, Cobham at the Coburg, Campbell at Sadler's Wells, Freer at the Pavilion, Elton at the Garrick, and the great Napoleon Gomersal at Astley's. Here the incomparable Ducrow flew like an angel over the classic sawdust, merely touching with his toe the "steed of Araby," which it was necessary to bring into an "equestrian act;" Ducrow, meanwhile, floated on the bosom of the air, the spirited animal doing all he knew to keep pace with him. I played the Sentimental Student in Glasgow to the Brigand of T. P. Cooke, who, in addition to the guitar song, "Love's Ritornella," took part in a "Pas de Trois" with a couple of charming ballet-girls at the Prince Bianchi's ball. All these popular actors, each a king in his dominion, strengthened their hold on public esteem by this generous rivalry; but the wreath was placed on the brow of James Wallack, the Brigand Chief, who reigned at Drury Lane. This dashing actor gave great effect to short parts of vital importance, coming on the scene at the critical moment, like Blucher at Waterloo, to clinch the glory of the day.

For example, Richmond may be rendered amiably by a modest walking gentleman, whose virtue alone guarantees victory; but when Wallack, wonderfully armed, appeared, his grand head set magnificently on his shoulders, and stood in the centre of the stage, like Ajax or Achilles! it was clear that Gloucester, though glorified by Edmund Kean, was a gone coon, and it was some considerable time before the shouts of the

audience, who applauded to a man, and, I may add, to a woman, sufficiently subsided to allow him to "walk into the bowels of the land." It may be argued that the "Old Stager" was more emphatic than the occasion required, and I am free to confess that, when Henry Irving achieved so signal a triumph over Colley Cibber by his admirable performances of Shakespeare's Richard, which, together with his Charles I. and Louis XI., places him with the most potent actors of the past, I was struck with the propriety of Mr. Brooke's performance of Richmond, and especially with his impressive delivery of the prayer before battle; but then, you see, Wallack came to fight, Cibber having cut out the prayer in deference, doubtless, to the days of cock-fighting, when the British public preferred to see a bull-dog with his tail up!

It is no easy matter, without the pen of Charles Lamb, Leigh Hunt, or Dr. Doran, to convey an adequate notion of an actor's true quality. Newspaper notices should be taken *cum grano salis*, for when Edmund Kean complained of an abusive article to Mrs. Garrick, the old lady, who had refused the request of Dr. Johnson for material to record her husband's life, fearing the strictures of that sturdy chronicler, said, "Why don't you write your own criticisms, Mr. Kean? David always did."

But Garrick, to whose diplomacy the glory of our stage is so deeply indebted, governed events. Deriving his mimetic genius from his Gallic ancestors, he was at bottom a man of business, commencing his career in trade. Foote used sarcastically to say that "he remembered Garrick living in Durham Yard, with three quarts of vinegar in his cellar, calling himself a wine-merchant;" a trade which he relinquished, and,

after a sharp provincial practice, playing everything from harlequin to high tragedy. Gifford brought him to his theatre in Goodman's Fields, at a time when the actors had fallen into a mechanical sing-song cadence, as vocalists, ignoring the libretto, limit their minds to the mechanism of music. The alacrity with which Garrick, in his young and vigorous manhood, "bustled" through Cibber's Richard, announced "to be played gratis by a gentleman who never appeared on any stage," seized the rich vein of comedy in it, by his chuckling exultation, "So much for Buckingham!" which became a tradition, making points rapidly, and rushing like a hurricane through the battle, excited an audience unused to acting like this. Slowly, however, he made his way to average nightly receipts of thirty pounds; but when permitted to play Bayes in the "Rehearsal," in which his mimetic power came out in full force, he aped his manager, who sent him a challenge, and, wounding him in the sword arm, caused the sudden withdrawal of the piece "owing to Mr. Garrick's indisposition." The town then began to talk of him. Luckily for our own agreeable humourist, Mr. Toole, the days of the duello are past.

The "Rehearsal" was reproduced on condition that Gifford was left out of the list, Garrick's good taste omitting Quin, who, after Betterton and Booth, held the classic stage, and was considered faultless in Brutus and Cato. Garrick's great success in Lear was owing to his marvellous imitation of the insanity of a gentleman who went mad immediately on the loss of his little daughter, whom he accidentally let fall from his arms out of window, an incident which the actor acknowledged gave him the first idea of Lear. His salary now rose rapidly from a pound a week to half the receipts, and he

became the rage, although some judges remained insensible to the greatness of his merit. Grey writes to Chute, "There are a dozen dukes of a night at Goodman's Fields sometimes, yet I am stiff in the opposition."

In May, 1749, Walpole writes:—"All the run is now after Garrick, a wine merchant who is turned player at Goodman's Fields. He plays all parts, and is a very good mimic. His acting I have seen, and may say so to you, who will not tell it again here, I see nothing wonderful in it; but it is heresy to say so." For my own part, irrespective of the laudable ambition to shine in Shakespeare, who is depicted waiting in Elysium to embrace the great actor—represented as being borne to him on the wings of angels, while his brothers and sisters of the sock and buskin are made to kneel in adoration in the foreground; despite "the hate that's only known upon the stage," I fancy Garrick felt more comfortable in his favourite part of Don Felix, as he took it for his farewell; as Kemble did Coriolanus; Young, Hamlet; Kean, Othello; and Macready, Macbeth; Susanna Centlivre's Hero affording ample opportunity for every variety of facial expression, in which Garrick's strong eye and shifting features would tell to advantage. It is true that, like the accomplished French-English actor of our day, the late Mr. Fechter, he was famous in "Hamlet," but failed in "Othello," from lack of the "majesty of repose," a quality which in the grand Edmund Kean was like the big sea in a calm, as his passion was like the ocean in a tempestuous night.

Gustavus Brooke and Salvini came nearest, the former especially in the godlike repose commencing the fifth act, the touchstone of the true ring in Othello; but the action of the latter in that act being at variance with the orthodox acceptation, possibly the result of a

faulty adaptation, any comparison would be unfair to the accomplished Italian, whose previous acts were fraught with graceful dignity and power. The want of consequence in repose, in Garrick, forbade competition with Quin in Brutus and Cato. An intimate friend of Garrick states that "he never could stand still on the stage." Macklin says, "He huddled all passions into bustle, bustle, bustle;" and it seems to have been Johnson's settled opinion that, admirable as was his imitation, it was mere mimicry. When Garrick complained that talking behind the scenes destroyed his feelings, "Pr'thee, don't talk nonsense, man," replied the Doctor; "Punch has no feelings."

Garrick's best soliloquy in "Hamlet" was that beginning, "Oh! what a rogue!" and he was most happy in the exhibition of anger, resentment, horror, despair, and madness; but was excelled in tenderness by Barry, whom he generously acknowledged to be the most exquisite lover that ever trod the stage! Mrs. Garrick said that "Kean was the only Richard that approached her David;" but after seeing him in the "Alchymist," she wrote:—"Dear Sir,—You can't play Abel Drugger. EVA GARRICK." Which drew forth the laconic reply:—"Madam,—I know it.—Yours, EDMUND KEAN."

The Hamlets of old, if memory serves, are thus classed: Holman, the scholar; Henderson, the gentleman; John Kemble, the Prince; Betterton, the Hamlet. Of those most popular in my day, I should call Young scholastic, C. Kean stylish, Fechter sensational, Irving spiritual. The first emerged from his library full of mellifluous elocution. Charles Kean was the glass of fashion, full of graceful action suited to the

words, showing great finish; his acting was throughout admirable, lending additional lustre to his great name. Fechter hit the fancy like a new French bonnet; but the flaxen wig might have been left to the fair Ophelia. The plumage of the Prince should be sable, like his father's. We were struck with the novelty of the exhibition, conveying with much ease and cleverness the refinement of the real, rather than suggesting the ideal. I fully believed in the Ghost; but an idea crept into my mind that the new Hamlet followed his father with less of awe than inquisitiveness. Fechter's success was overwhelming, and I went round with Charles Mathews, from a private box, to offer our congratulations; but there was no admittance, the critics being in the anteroom, writing rapidly for the morning papers. Fechter, hearing my voice, suddenly opened the door, and confronted me on the landing with, "I hear you don't approve of my Don Cæsar." I said, "You are right; I consider you below James Wallack and Frederic Lemaitre in that character; but I come now to tell you that you are above Don Cæsar, for you play Hamlet, which touches the highest round of the ladder."

Henry Irving as Hamlet struck the keynote of success on his entrance. Instead of the customary advance fresh from the toilet, with every curl adjusted to a nicety, the actor's dark locks, unkempt, fell over a brow of gloom; his whole bearing denoting utter desolation, giving significance to the Queen's injunction to "cast this nightly colour off." From first to last, whether in the extremity of love or fear, through all the varied phases of the character, the absorption was complete, and Colonel Harvey, who sat beside me in the stalls, whispered, "He's in it." The final scene was admirable, and refresh-

ingly contrived to take place in an open court of arms instead of being confined to the heated presence chamber.

I entertain no undue preference for the past, and could not have been more bewitched with my first London play, fifty-six years ago, at Covent Garden, Shakespeare's "As You Like It," than I was with Mr. Wills's last enchantment at the Lyceum, called "Iolanthe." Charles Young's voice sounding through the Forest of Arden like an organ through cathedral aisles, came not on my ear with grander effect than Mr. Mead's fine organ as the sedate Moorish Physician talking in the flower-garden of Iolanthe. The untutored grace and sweet abandon in the fair form of Ellen Terry ravished my senses at seventy-one, equally with the sweet songstress Maria Tree as Rosalind, before the figures were reversed. I feel as freshly as I did at seventeen. Nor did the Orlando of old diminish my admiration of the romantic chivalry and picturesque beauty of Mr. Irving's "Sir Tristan," which contrasted so gracefully with his masterly performance of Shylock, played earlier in the same evening.

In my recent performance of Charles Surface, I felt William Farren's Sir Peter so much on a par with his late father, with whom I played the part forty years before, that I fell into my place at once, fancying myself a youth again playing with the original delineator of distinguished old men. I well remember Downton, whose hearty nature maintained its ground against the exquisite art of the Elder Farren, for I played Darnley in Liverpool, to his Doctor Cantwell and the Charlotte of Ellen Tree in her spinster and my bachelor days. But the acting did not overshadow the Doctor Downward of Arthur Cecil, nor the Miss Gwilt of classic Ada Cavendish. I relish Mr. Toole's Paul Pry,

although I have seen Liston; Mr. J. S. Clarke's piquant Pangloss is as full of vigour and sparkle as the brilliant Harley's; and I enjoy a Quiet Rubber with Mr. Hare after having seen the cards shuffled by the most scientific players of the past.

The Kembles and Keans may keep their place in our memory without disparagement to such admirable artists as the Hermann Vezins, the Arthur Stirlings, the Kendals, the Bancrofts, and Henry Neville. The healthy vigour of the old school may still be seen in Mrs. Stirling, Mr. Ryder, Mr. Howe and Mr. Creswick, with a glimpse at rare intervals of the matchless Mrs. Keeley; while the new school cannot be better defended than by Mrs. Bancroft in her beautiful new home in the Haymarket, having left her old quarters to be illumined by the exquisite art of Genevieve Ward. Then there is the Criterion, so cozy under the wing of the palatial restaurant reared on the "White Bear's" retreat, in whose coffee-room I sipped my negus in the old Haymarket days; and now the airy and smart Charles Wyndham, well-balanced by bounteous Nature's own child, the genial Hill, cheers the mind, as Spiers and Pond the body. And there's the little Vaudeville perking itself up cheek by jowl with the grand old Adelphi on the strength of those capitally-contrasted charming comedians, Thorne and James, while exhaustless Dion Boucicault, who first gave life to the new building by his "Colleen Bawn," comes back across the waters with another rope, and revived power. It matters little if the old school be irreverently styled the "Teapot" or the modern "cup and saucer drama," so long as the tea is good and the food nourishing; but as wine means port to a sound stomach the drama should spell Shakespeare to a healthful mind. Honour, therefore, is

due to Miss Litton for giving the National Theatre its natural food, and practice to the young actors in immortal verse who are fortunate in having a good example in so scholarly an actor as Mr. Hermann Vezin. Fawcett and Mrs. Gibbs were the Touchstone and Audrey, and the inimitable Keeley the peasant William at Covent Garden; but nothing could be more clever than the acting of that truly British artist, Lionel Brough, who can let go the painter of burlesque, and pull himself together cleverly in the classic drama. The artlessness of Audrey was charming in Miss Hodson, and the peasant William was played by Mr. Bannister in a manner worthy the descendant of the immortal Jack.

I cannot conclude this scribble without a special line of praise to Mrs. Bateman, to whom the public is indebted for erecting a temple to Shakespeare on the classic ground of Sadler's Wells, where, with her charming daughters, she continues the healthful instruction so long administered by Samuel Phelps.

The stage is the people's pulpit, and every manager should strive to merit the compliment paid by Paul Whitehead to Garrick:—

“A Nation's taste depends on you,
Perhaps a Nation's virtue too.”

CHANCES!

STORY OF A YOUNG ACTRESS.

By MARIE LITTON.



HE was my namesake, and was called “Marie”—Marie Lambton. A dear, charming little creature she was, too, when I first knew her, looking, with her sweet smiles, as

if she had not a care on her mind; and yet she must have been often fearfully plagued by that mother of hers. Mrs. Lambton had retired from trade on a small competence, with which, however, she seemed unable, owing to her reckless, slatternly habits, to “make two ends meet” (as the phrase goes), stretch the two ends as [she might]. She was flaunting in her dress—self-willed and worldly-minded in her disposition. I have no doubt that she really loved her daughter; but she seemed to look on her only child as a species of property, to be used for her own advantage and her personal aggrandisement; and she ruled this household chattel with a firm, almost tyrannical hand.

After turning over in her mind the best means to dispose of her daughter with a view to future emolument, Mrs. Lambton had decided on the stage as most suitable to her purpose. “If I had but the *chance*,” she would say, “to get the girl on the stage, I could look forward to my old days with comfort. But where am I to look for the *chance*? However, I will not despair; the *chance* may turn up.” Who does not look on “chances” turning up?

Marie at seventeen was lovely; and her sprightly bearing gave her loveliness an additional charm. But, for all her gay animation and liveliness of manner, she was delicate in appearance. Her mother's friends, whose daughters, compared with Marie, were dowdies, declared that she looked consumptive, and shook their heads over her; but no prognostications could have damped the sweet girl's joyous spirit.

If ever subdued in manner, it was when Marie was in the presence of the one person to whom she has given her whole heart. This was a certain Harry Stanford, who had met and learned to love her. But Harry

Stanford was only a lawyer's clerk ; and the ambitious mother looked forward to a better match for her child, although she never placed any decided veto on the aspirations of the lovers. Besides, the young man had been brought up in a Puritanical family, and, following the principles inculcated in him from his childhood, looked with an aversion almost amounting to horror on the stage. Such principles were naturally most adverse to the opinions of Mrs. Lambton and her views for her daughter. "Drat the fellow's principles!" she had been heard to mutter, "they are perfectly outrageous."

One morning Marie came to me flushed and excited, with tears glistening in her eyes. I asked the cause.

"You see, mamma's *chance* has turned up," she said. "They want an extra-lady at the Variety Theatre. The manager has seen me, and says I shall do ; and mamma says I must accept the *chance*."

"Why, then, do you cry, dear?" I inquired. "Do you dislike the idea of going on the stage?"

"Not at all!" she replied, with animation. "I think I should like it awfully—but——"

"This chance will be your first step," I said. "We must all begin at the beginning—at least we ought to do so."

"I know that," murmured Marie, hanging her head, "but——"

"But what!"

"But Harry will object to my appearing, so dreadfully, I am sure," and she began to cry. "He will be so angry; and I cannot bear to vex him. But then mamma, you see, will not allow me to let the *chance* slip. Oh! I don't know what to do! I don't know what to do!"

What Marie would do was obvious, under

the control of her mother. She undertook the very feeble part offered her, and made her appearance; and even in her minor position her beauty and grace attracted attention. I met her shortly afterwards with her mother. Marie dropped behind for a moment, to whisper to me, with choking voice, "He has cast me off for ever!" "He" meant Harry Stanford. "Ah! my poor girl," I thought, "your first *chance* has been a *mischance* to you."

A few Sundays afterwards, to my great surprise, I saw my Marie side by side with her wooer at church. They looked demure, but very happy, holding the same hymn-book in their hands. I smiled to myself, thinking how weak was man's resolution when in love. A shy little note from Marie, who had seen me at church, explained the little mystery. Harry Stanford, in spite of all his prejudices, had yielded to the conqueror Love. He had gone so far as to permit her actual appearance on those dreadful boards, but on her solemn promise, that she would never appear in any attire unbecoming to female delicacy, and would never allow herself to be "hailed about by those horrid men."

For some time I heard nothing of my little Marie; and my own avocations prevented me from bestowing on her the same interest which I had been wont to do. I contented myself with concluding that she was perfectly happy.

The events which ensued were told me afterwards, partly by Marie herself, partly by her ridiculous, but imperious, mother.

The pretty young "extra-lady" had found favour, it seems, in the eyes of the manager. The secession of one of the prominent actresses had induced him to offer the part of a young Prince, in a Fairy burlesque, to

the graceful and intelligent novice. Marie, mindful of her promise to her wooer, had steadily refused. But her mother displayed the most furious indignation at her daughter's "egregious folly," as she termed it, in giving way to such "ridiculous and senseless scruples." Here was a *chance* offered her, such as one might never have again! to throw it away would be a sin! She owed compliance to the poor mother, who had slaved for her all her life, etc., etc. Moreover, that idiot young Stanford would never know anything about her change of part; as his "foolish fancies" would prevent his going into the theatre. Mrs. Lambton raged, stormed, and hurled strong language on her poor daughter's head. The inevitable result came—Marie yielded—accepted the *chance*, on which so much stress had been laid by her mother. She appeared in her splendid, but not over decorous, costume of the young Prince, and, I may add, made a signal success in the part—so signal a success, that the newspapers—generally so slow to recognize progress in a novice—teemed with her praises. The notices came to the knowledge of Harry Stanford. For once he broke through the tyranny of his puritanical tenets. He went to the theatre; and, instead of being delighted with the grace and intelligence of his beloved, he was disgusted. He wrote poor Marie a hard, angry letter; he utterly gave her up, he said. The rupture between the lovers was complete.

Poor Marie! her great *chances* obviously brought her but little happiness.

From this moment Marie Lambton drooped in spirit. Her manner, off the stage, was listless and oppressed. A settled melancholy seemed to overcloud all around her; and her health appeared to suffer; although her mother could, or would, see nothing of her

daughter's ailing condition. On the stage, however, Marie displayed a spirit and animation, which were almost feverish, and added more and more to her success. Other prominent parts were given her. She rose in reputation. "And she wanted to throw her *chance* away," said Mrs. Lambton to her friends with scorn. "The silly child must feel now what it is to have a mother!"

Marie was, naturally, not without many admirers. Presents of a valuable description were showered in on her. Young Guardsmen and fashionable "Swells" threw bouquets in profusion, and dropped innumerable letters addressed to "Miss Lambton" at the stage door. All these would-be evidences of adoration were treated by the "little fool," as her mother called her, with indifference and contempt. In her refusal of all these advances, Marie, for once, bid defiance to the maternal tyranny.

Among the admirers of the rising young actress was a stockbroker—a middle-aged gentleman, of rather prepossessing appearance. He saw, and loved. He offered diamonds, and was refused. Then he offered his hand in marriage. Marie again declined. Her heart was still with him who had thrown her over. But now Mrs. Lambton stepped in with determination. Here was a *chance* of her own settlement in life, as well as her daughter's—a *chance* indeed! "Such a *chance* might never occur again; and to throw it away would be madness!" she reiterated day by day. "And for what?" she would ask. "All for a young fool, who cared for her no longer."

Marie consented at last, but with a bleeding heart.

By a strange coincidence, I happened to be present at Richmond, when poor Marie was driven over by her affianced adorer, to-

gether with her mother, to dine at the "Star and Garter." On meeting I "wished her joy." I shall never forget the sad, melancholy smile with which she answered me. She was pale, and looked seriously ill. Her husband, that was to be, was a good-looking man, and obviously a gentleman. But evidently Marie's heart had been buried with her first love.

I was standing at the door of the hotel with some friends when the party drove away. As they started a young man rushed wildly forward, and threw a paper into Marie's lap. I knew him to be Harry Stanford. I tried to grasp his arm in order to expostulate with him: but he tore himself away and disappeared. When I looked at the receding carriage I saw that Marie had fallen back. She had probably fainted. Her mother was fanning her face violently with a handkerchief.

Not many weeks afterwards I received a note from Mrs. Lambton, begging me to come and see my *protégée* (as she termed it) since her poor girl was very ill. I went. Marie was in bed, pale as that Death which had evidently placed its cruel hand on her. She smiled faintly, with a sweet look of pleasure as she saw me, and made a weak sign to her mother to leave us.

"It has killed me," she gasped, when we were alone. "I did not deserve it! No! I did not!" Her voice only came in jerky respirations; and I begged her to be calm. "No," she muttered, "I must tell you all." She held out her white, thin, wasted hand, in which was a crumpled paper. "Read! read!" she stammered.

It was the letter from Harry Stanford, thrown into the carriage; and I must say the letter was a bitterly cruel one. "Faithless to your vows of love, as to your promises, I

curse the first hour I knew you. You will see me no more. I start for Australia to-morrow." I looked pityingly at the poor, dying girl.

"Place it in my coffin with me," she found breath to say, "and, if you can, let him know that I forgive him. I am dying fast I feel. Better so, better so!" She raised herself with difficulty to try and kiss my cheek. As she fell back her last words were. "Death! death! After all, it is my best *chance*!"

"NOTHING SUCCEEDS LIKE SUCCESS."

BY FRANK A. MARSHALL.

"**N**OTHING succeeds like success," I remarked to my friend, Captain J—, as we came out of the Royal Pantheon Theatre, after having witnessed the 301st representation of some piece which, had it "run on its merits," would scarcely have reached its 31st night.

"Quite right," answered the Captain, who, I may mention, was governor of one of our large prisons; "and if you will come and smoke a cigar with me at my club, I will tell you rather an amusing instance of that principle, as exemplified in the career of one of my *protégés*."

I gladly assented, and in a few minutes we were seated in a snug corner of the quiet smoking-room in the Junior Fogies' Club.

"You may remember," said the Captain, "the trial of one George Topham, for fraud, about six months ago?"

"Perfectly; a very clever fellow, and well-educated too."

"Yes ; he was the cleverest rogue in the three kingdoms ; and though it was pretty certain he had been in half the great swindles for the last ten years, the police could never before get any case against him. After his conviction he was sent to my place ; and during the first week he met with an accident which necessitated his going into the infirmary. I used to sit and talk with him sometimes ; he amused me and interested me as a study of character. One day he quoted the same proverb as you did coming out of the theatre to-night, and narrated the following illustration of it from his own personal experience :—

" 'One of the most successful enterprises I ever worked was the Hildebrand Mine. It was a real silver mine in South America, which had been abandoned by the owners ; one of my friends and myself had bought it cheap, and we resolved to work it as a limited liability concern, with a small company. When you have got a good plant of that sort, the snigger you keep it the better ; the fewer the people in it, and the larger their stake, the easier they are to manage. It may take a little more trouble to get a thousand than a hundred pounds out of a man, supposing he has it ; but it's well worth the extra trouble. When a man has got a serious stake in any affair, he is always cautious how he blows on it, and he is always anxious to put more in to save his first risk ; but when he has got only two or three hundreds in, he cuts up rusty at the first sign of being swindled, and does not mind what shindy he makes.' "

"Your friend was a bit of a philosopher," I remarked.

"He was, indeed. But to continue his story : 'We had got one or two pretty good men into the mine, but we wanted some more capital, so that we might be able to

pay a good dividend to begin with. I determined to go and try my luck at Slowcumleigh, which was marked in my private map of England as a very good place, with plenty of rich men in the neighbourhood of just the sort we wanted : not large land-owners, but men who had made a good fortune, and had bought a bit of ground, and built themselves substantial, comfortable houses, with well-kept gardens and capital vineries ; houses where you could still get a glass of old port wine out of a handsome cut decanter, instead of light claret out of a thin blown one, which is what nearly all your swells have come to now-a-days.

" 'I hesitated for a little what character to adopt, but at last I settled on that of a retired scientific gentleman with a taste for mineralogy. I took a neat villa outside the town, bought a few specimens of minerals and a pair of spectacles, devoted a couple of hours every day to the study of a "Text-Book of Mineralogy," and kept my eyes and ears open whenever I went into the town.

" 'It was not long before I came across the very man for my purpose—a Mr. Blagham, of Blagham Park. His was one of the best houses in the neighbourhood, with about a hundred acres of ground and a stone quarry, of which I availed myself, as an excuse for scraping an acquaintance with him. I asked leave to search in this quarry for specimens, and he very graciously granted it.

" 'Mankind may be classified in many ways ; but I divide them briefly into "men who don't want more than five per cent. for their money," and "men who are never content with less than ten." Blagham was one of those who would stick at almost nothing, if he saw his way to anything over the latter figure. We soon got upon the subject of

mines, and I saw that my constant allusions to the Hildebrand had made an impression on him. I did not fall into the mistake of being too eager at first ; and to make a long story short, in less than a month Mr. Blagham had taken £10,000 worth of shares in the Hildebrand Mine, at par. Two months after he had paid the money he received his dividend at the rate of twelve per cent. per annum.

“ ‘Meanwhile, I had established myself as one of the family at Blagham Park. Of course, the master of the house, or rather his money, was my chief attraction ; but there was a secondary one in the shape of the younger Miss B——, a very pretty girl, rather fast ; but in these days one looks over that defect. The father and the daughter comprised the whole family. In spite, or perhaps partly in virtue of, my assumed character, I made considerable advance in Emily’s affections ; she thought there was something rather creditable, I suppose, in making an impression on the heart of a steady scientific man.

“ ‘As soon as Mr. B—— had received his dividend, he was anxious to buy a few more shares, and after a very decent show of reluctance, I let him have £5,000 more of Hildebrands. Of course, I remonstrated with him ; but his answer was, “My dear Bonson”—that was my assumed name—“I know what I am about. I began life with five hundred pounds, and I am worth a good sixty thousand now ; you can’t tell me I don’t know a good thing when I see it.”

“ ‘I took the five thousand pounds, which, as it happened, came in very useful ; and in a week afterwards, Miss Emily Blagham and I were on our way to the Continent. We returned by a circuitous route to England, and settled down at a very quiet watering-

place in Yorkshire. To oblige the lady, I had gone through the ceremony of marriage ; but I had previously yielded to similar scruples in one or two other cases. The exact value of the contract, from a legal point of view, I would not take upon myself to determine.”

“That was a pretty cool confession of bigamy, Captain.”

“Oh, my friend Topham, *alias* Bonson, thought nothing of that. But the amusing part of the story is now to come.”

“ ‘I never shall know,’ continued my ingenious friend, ‘how it was that old Blagham found us out so soon, but he did. We had not been established in our cottage at Dulhamsea quite a week, when one morning who should walk into our little sitting-room, but my darling Emily’s father. I naturally prepared for an explosion ; what was my astonishment when he came up to me, took my hand most cordially, and exclaimed in his heartiest tones, “My dear boy, what have you been hiding for all this time ?” I thought it was “a kid,” of course, and looked over his shoulder to see if any representative of the law’s majesty was behind him ; but no, he was alone. Before I could recover from my astonishment Emily came in, and immediately rushed into her father’s arms. The family picture was now complete.

“ ‘You must both come back to London with me, and we’ll have a regular jolly time of it. I am going to introduce you to my friends, Bonson—or George, as I ought to call you.”

“ ‘I rather winced at the “George,” as the last Christian name I had adopted was Arthur ; but the old gentleman clapped me on the back, and whispered in my ear, “I know all about it, my boy ; you are a clever fellow, and one of the most successful men I ever met.”

"Certainly I had been pretty successful in getting money out of him, but I scarcely expected him to see it in so amiable a light. We had a very pleasant little dinner, and afterwards, when old Blagham and I were smoking a cigar in the garden, he said to me, "George, I have always, as you know, admired one thing, and that is, success; yours has been, hitherto, a very successful career, and as long as it remains so, I stick to you. You must be married again under your right name, and then we shall get along swimmingly."

"So we went back to London together: Emily and I were married again at a registrar's office, and Mr. B—— took a splendid suite of rooms in one of the best West-end hotels. There we gave dinners and parties, and led a very jolly life of it. He introduced me to all his friends as "a very clever man," and boasted what a lot of "good things" I had put him into; so that I had many private applications for advice from people who wanted to make a few thousands. Into the honesty of the schemes they never inquired; the only question was how much was to be got out of them; anything over ten per cent. they jumped at, and I never knew before how great a solvent of principle Interest is.

"I remember one party especially, one of the first given, when I had taken rather more wine than usual, and my father-in-law was bent on drawing me out after dinner. I was drawn out, and—of course, without mentioning names—I was induced to give a vivid sketch of some of the most happy swindles in which I had been concerned. My narrative was received with the most hearty laughter and approbation, for I said not a word about any but the most successful. I did hear one man say to his neighbour, "What a d——d scoundrel!" but the answer was

quite decisive—"That may be, but he's a devilish clever fellow."

"It was only fair that I should stand by old Blagham, as he stood by me; so we set to work to get out of the Hildebrand Mine with as little loss as possible. I called a meeting of two or three of my cleverest friends, and we resolved to make a really grand coup—namely, to get up a company ourselves to buy the property from us. There was a vein of silver, a very shallow one, as we knew; but by working this properly, and getting two engineers to report favourably, we got rid of the mine on capital terms, and Blagham recouped his loss, and something more besides. I don't think the new company managed quite so well, for they were wound up in about six months afterwards, though you may take your oath my friends had got out of it first.

"Emily had very expensive tastes, and money went out quicker than it came in. I was drawn, in a weak moment, into the unfortunate affair on account of which I have been forced to pay a visit, Captain J——, to your hospitable roof. When I got nabbed, I sent at once to Blagham for some ready money to pay for my defence; he returned an indignant answer, to the effect that he was astonished at my effrontery, and from that moment "he renounced all connection with a monster of deceit who had imposed upon his too generous nature, and had robbed him of two of his greatest treasures—his self-respect and his beloved child." He threatened to proceed against me for bigamy, and so release his daughter from "a tie which could but reflect on her indelible disgrace." To this most virtuous effusion I replied, reminding him of certain transactions in which we had been concerned together, and intimating that if he refused to help me I should be obliged to call him as a witness on my

trial, and put to him some very disagreeable questions. As to his daughter, I informed him that she had relieved herself of the tie that bound her to me by running away with my friend Captain Flashingham, news of which interesting event had reached me that very morning.

"Old B—— never answered this letter, but he sent me a hundred pounds, and since that I have never heard anything more of him. But I have to thank him, at least, for confirming me in the great principle of modern morality—"Nothing succeeds like success."

"Such was the story," concluded Captain J——, "which Mr. George Topham related to me; and I think he was justified in the inference that he drew from his own experience."

"IN THE FRONT ROW."

By ARTHUR MATTHISON.



H! my dear, it's only them as has been in front rows, as knows the hazardness of it, whatever sort of a front row it is. It is that hard to keep up, an' the eye of Eurup is that fixed on you, that if it wasn't for the glory of it, give me, says I, the secludedness and privation of the backest row possible! Think of the pit and gallery front rows, first nights, to start with!

Look at them as is in the front row of serciety, how they has to scramble, and fight, and tear, to keep it up! *Else somebody else 'ud slip in?* Of course they would, like a helegant heel! Same in pollertics, same in the drama, same everywhere, and more espeshal

in the front row of the ballet; for if you make a fox's paw there—no, my dear, it isn't a "*'unting term*," it's French for accident—if you make a fox's paw there, them fearful foot-lights shows it off, and your skirts is too short to cover it up. The 'ole of the 'ouse sees it; the ballet ladies enjoys it; and the "extras" are, what you may say, in extrasies about it. So altogether, my dear, it's the most tryinest front row as is!

"*Did I ever have a fox's paw?*" Well, yes. I've frequent lost my shoe; I've come on when I hadn't oughter, interfering with the cackle, and once when I was a-playin' a "*Virgin of the Sun*"—about two months afore little "*Bizzmark*," as Hevans *would* have him called—in a Pershing ballet, I fell into the Lake of "*Burnin' Hasphodel*," and injured my tibbyer fearful.

"*What's a tibbyer, my love?*" Ah, I forgot as you didn't know them annatomik names; it means a needle bone, an' it threads its way up out of your ankel. An' that reminds of a *bong mott* of Mrs. Keeley's years ago, when she fell'd over a catarackt, and ses, when they ast her where she'd hurt herself, "Oh my profetick sole, my hankle!" ses she.

"*You don't see nothing in that!*" No more don't I; but I heard the leading man say as it was "*doosid good*;" and I know it was a *bong mott*, for I remember him calling it that distinct, and he was in the front row, as regards French, and wit, and things.

"*How long have I been in the ballet?*" Why, I've been in as many Pantermine as that old duk of a Blanshad hisself; and though my figger isn't what it was—he's kep' his!—I was that neat and trim once, as the eyes of the front rows of the stalls was always hupon me; though never in the 'ole corse of her spangled kereer has Jemina

Hevans hever cast a hi at the golden kids as lolls there.

"*What's a golden kid?*" A golden kid, my dear, is a 'appy young man as 'as had a father to leave him wealth, which he spends on clothes and stalls, for he's never hout of heither. I remember three or four years ago, one lady—I beg her parding—one "person" as used to look back at 'em to that degree—she was in the second row—that the front row pintoed it out to her one morning at rehearsal, and pintoed it out that warm and strikin' that she broke out with such langwidges as perfectly shok'd us.

"Front row!" ses she. "Hold frights!" ses she. "Flopping rinosoreuses!" ses she. "Kormak's Gum Boils!" ses she. The front row, to a lady, struck on the spot. "Out you go!" ses Kormak—little dear!—and out she wented. Ah, my dear, if Mr. Chatterton had only a stuck that scene into the Pantermine, wouldn't it ha' draw'd! Though, between me and you, my dear, some of the front row was that anteeck and wintery, that, after they'd rehersed twice as the "Golden Air'd Dorters of Spring," Blanshad chang'd their names to the "Weerd and Wanderin' Whiches of Winter;" an' when it come to the night, my love, they wasn't in the Bill at all, but just went on as a ornary "Korpse de Ballet." You're right, lovey, it was "*disgraceful*." "Kormak's Gum Boils!" indeed. You're only a corry pheemale at present, Ameliar; but you'll soon be in the front row, and then you'll feel some day how hard it is to have your old age flung in your gums by dorntless young persons, which is brassiness itself. Never be brassy, lovey, for it only dazzles the golden kids; it soon wears off, and then where are you? Without brass, I've been in the ballet twenty-seven years, and brought up a family on it. I've

got our girls and three boys, as good children as ever warm'd a mother's heart. Ah! Ameliar, my "golden kids" are all at home, bless 'em!

"*You wish you was my dorter?*" So you shall be, my fairy dorter, my stage child. Hush! there's poor Mrs. Metcalfe; we mustn't let her hear us talking about dorters.

"*Why?*"

Because, when we begun the season, her dorter, Carrie, was in the ballet. A pretty little chestnut-hair'd, brown-eyed little thing of seventeen, and her mother used to come with her every night: she isn't much above thirty herself. Well, we all notic'd what a delicate little creature she was, and I've heard her coughin' in the wings, on them bitter cold nights of winter, till I felt my eyes getting moist a-looking at her. Well, one night, about a month ago, we was all standing, ready to flutter on—that was Blanshad's word; he told us to "flutter" on—and we miss'd Carrie. We look'd round, and ask'd the call-boy; when, just before we got our cue, comes the mother, dress'd in Carrie's fairy skirts, and with Carrie's silver wand. "Where's Carrie?" I ses to her, quick and frighten'd. She only just had time to say, with the tears rolling down her cheeks, "She died this morning! her money almost kept us. Mr. Kormak's let me go on instead." "Appear! appear! appear!" rings out the cue, and that poor ballet lady had to "flutter" on, her darling child dead at home. Tears in her eyes and in her heart too, she had to go on, so as there might be bread for the two little ones still left at home.

"*Was there nobody to help her in her trouble?*" Ah! my girl, you little know the theatricle purfession, if you think that every ballet-lady's hand wasn't in her pocket—not

her fairy one—that night. But here ! I ain't a Nome ; I'm a Fairy. I don't dwell in caves ; I dance on the greensward. I ain't a toad in an 'ole ; I'm a boundin' Nymph of the Waters. I don't grovvel in the earth ; I float on the clouds. I ain't got no right to be meloncoly ; I've got to smile, and pirooett, and wreethe, and twine, and wind, and tie myself up in knots with the others, and undo myself, all to lovely music, and setterer ; and I do it, have done it, and will do it as long as I've got a leg to stand on. When ballet and chorus gets well planted on the stage, you can't easy uproot 'em. Not you !

“*What's the matter ?*” Matter ! Why, that's old Mrs. MacStivin, the Mother of the Ballet, my dear. Thank Goodness, she didn't see me ! for she is that cross-grain'd and venermous, that there's no living in the theatre with her. There'd be no living anywhere with her, not even in the Regency Park. Why, my dear, she's buried nine children ; and I think it would ha' been a good thing for serciety in general, and the ballet in petickler, if——. She aint a listening, is she ? “*No.*” All right. I think it would ha' been a good thing if it had been the other way about, and — the — nine — children — had — buried — her ! She's a Beesom !

“*What's that circular I've got ?*” Oh, it's a “call” to go to be converted with tea and buns and a flourish of crumpets, at Hexeter Rall. I've often been reform'd with muffins and tea and things, and I'm that willin' to be converted simlar and regler, that I lapsis into sin again immegent. “*Go ?*” O' course I shall go ; it pleases them, and don't do us no harm. On you go, Ameliar ; there's Kormak's stick a-sawin' the air ; let's flutter on, lovey. “Appear ! appear ! appear !

Frou—u—u—u. No ! no ! no ! Go back ! go back ! *All* over again ! Yah ! Front row simply disgraceful ! Now ! Ah ! that's something like ! One ! two ! three ! Lovely, lovely ! lovely !”

SEN ARTYSTY ; OR, THE ARTIST'S DREAM.

BY MADAME HELENA MODJESKA.

(Translated from the Polish by OSCAR WILDE.)



TOO have had my dreams : ay,
known indeed

The crowded visions of a fiery
youth
Which haunt me still.

* * * *

Methought that once I lay,
Within some garden close, what time the
Spring

Breaks like a bird from Winter, and the sky
Is sapphire-vaulted. The pure air was soft,
And the deep grass I lay on soft as air.
The strange and secret life of the young trees
Swelled in the green and tender bark, or
burst

To buds of sheathèd emerald ; violets
Peered from their nooks of hiding, half
afraid

Of their own loveliness ; the vermeil rose
Opened its heart, and the bright star-flower
Shone like a star of morning. Butterflies,
In painted liveries of brown and gold,
Took the shy bluebells as their pavilions
And seats of pleasance ; overhead a bird
Made snow of all the blossoms as it flew
To charm the woods with singing : the whole
world
Seemed waking to delight !

And yet—and yet—

My soul was filled with leaden heaviness :
I had no joy in Nature; what to me,
Ambition's slave, was crimson-stained rose,
Or the gold-sceptred crocus? The bright
bird

Sang out of tune for me, and the sweet
flowers

Seemed but a pageant, and an unreal show
That mocked my heart; for, like the fabled
snake

That stings itself to anguish, so I lay,
Self-tortured, self-tormented.

The day crept

Unheeded on the dial, till the sun
Dropt, purple-sailed, into the gorgeous East,
When, from the fiery heart of that great orb,
Came One whose shape of beauty far out-
shone

The most bright vision of this common earth.
Girt was she in a robe more white than flame,
Or furnace-heated brass; upon her head
She bare a laurel crown, and like a star
That falls from the high heaven suddenly,
Passed to my side.

Then kneeling low, I cried,
“Oh, much-desired! Oh, long-awaited for!
Immortal Glory! Great world-conqueror!
Oh, let me not die crownless; once, at least,
Let thine imperial laurels bind my brows,
Ignoble else. Once let the clarion-note
And trump of loud ambition sound my name,
And for the rest I care not.”

Then to me,

In gentle voice, the angel made reply :
“Child ignorant of the true happiness,
Nor knowing life's best wisdom, thou wert
made
For light, and love, and laughter; not to
waste

Thy youth in shooting arrows at the sun,
Or nurturing that ambition in thy soul

Whose deadly poison will infect thy heart,
Marring all joy and gladness! Tarry here,
In the sweet confines of this garden-close,
Whose level meads and glades delectable
Invite for pleasure; the wild bird that wakes
These silent dells with sudden melody
Shall be thy playmate; and each flower that
blows

Shall twine itself unbidden in thy hair—
Garland more meet for thee than the dread
weight

Of Glory's laurel-wreath.”

“Ah! fruitless gifts,”

I cried, unheeding of her prudent word,
“Are all such mortal flowers, whose brief
lives

Are bounded by the dawn and setting sun.
The anger of the noon can wound the rose,
And the rain rob the crocus of its gold;
But thine immortal coronal of Fame,
Thy crown of deathless laurel, this alone
Age cannot harm, nor winter's icy tooth
Pierce to its hurt, nor common things pro-
fane.”

No answer made the angel, but her face
Dimmed with the mists of pity.

Then methought

That from mine eyes, wherein ambition's
torch

Burned with its latest and most ardent flame,
Flashed forth two level beams of straightened
light,

Beneath whose fulgent fires the laurel crown
Twisted and curled, as when the Sirian star
Withers the ripening corn, and one pale leaf
Fell on my brow; and I leapt up and felt
The mighty pulse of Fame, and heard far off
The sound of many nations praising me!

* * * * *

One fiery-coloured moment of great life!
And then—how barren was the nations'
praise!

How vain the trump of Glory ! Bitter thorns
 Were in that laurel leaf, whose toothèd barbs
 Burned and bit deep till fire and red flame
 Seemed to feed full upon my brain, and
 make

The garden a bare desert.

With wild hands
 I strove to tear it from my bleeding brow,
 But all in vain ; and with a dolorous cry
 That paled the lingering stars before their
 time,

I waked at last, and saw the timorous dawn
 Peer with grey face into my darkened room,
 And would have deemed it a mere idle
 dream

But for this restless pain that gnaws my
 heart,
 And the red wounds of thorns upon my brow.

WASTE PAPER.

By ARTHUR W. PINERO.



THAT sheet of paper, woven by
 hand or compounded by ma-
 chine, smooth or rough, thick or
 thin, or whatever its quality ; let-
 ter, draft, or foolscap, or whatever its size ; can
 ever as it leaves its cradle—the mill—hug
 itself (or fold itself) with the assurance that it
 shall never find its way to that receptacle for
 waste paper—whence it can never emerge
 but with all its glazed and stiffened grandeur
 crushed out of it—the butter-shop ?

Documents once of most dreadful con-
 sequence, slumber their last sleep beneath
 the buttermilk's counter. There are copies
 of Bills in Chancery, dealing perhaps with
 some estate whereon grew the grass that fed
 the cow that produced the milk that made

the butter sold in this very buttermilk's shop.
 There are voluminous tailors' accounts (in-
 curred in the days of a dandy's courtship) with
 cold-blooded lies in them enough to freeze the
 butter in the hottest of weather ; and love
 letters (written by the dandy in those days of
 courting) which should melt it in the very
 deepest of winter. There are very old Bills of
 Exchange, which have helped to ruin our
 grandfathers, sleeping there with one eye
 open, as it were, the vicious cunning of their
 adolescence still clinging to them in their
 age ; and old cheques, many of which, having
 been dishonoured in their lives, have gone
 down in sorrow to their grave, branded with
 the red ink indorsement of shame and failure.
 There are all sorts of books, from the holiest
 of books to the flimsiest of French novels ;
 and there are your poems (never published),
 and my five act play (never performed), and
 scores of music, whose voice shall never
 reverberate in the crystal chandelier of the
 opera-house, nor invite the pattering of feet
 in the ball room.

A heap of Waste Paper lately paused
 with me on its way to destruction. I am the
 executor of a man recently deceased, and I
 have been slowly wading through a heap of
 letters and books and bills. Some I have
 burnt, some I have doubly locked up in steel
 and iron, others I have consigned to the
 buttermilk. I suppose it is because my arms
 are weary with lifting and tearing and folding
 that I have an erroneous system of estimating
 weight ; at any rate my buttermilk, whom I
 have always considered an honest man, differs
 from my calculations amazingly.

He is a thoughtful buttermilk, if not an
 honest one, and I think a little sentimental
 into the bargain, for he has this morning
 returned to me an old, yellow, dust-stained,
 letter, which has a lock of fair hair carefully

pinned in the left hand corner. He has returned the letter to me, asking me if I had intended to sell it to him with the rest of the rubbish. It had really escaped my notice. This is the letter :—

“NUMBER 18, BREWER STREET, BATH,
“*2nd May, 1839.*

“MY DEAR UNCLE RODERICK,—I am pained to receive your letter bearing date the 23rd of last month, inasmuch as it convinces me, beyond any doubt I may have clung to, how terribly my father is incensed against me for my late marriage. But I am still more hurt to find that you, my dear uncle, are leagued with my father against me, and that you can, like him, find it in your heart and in your conscience to counsel me to discard the young lady with whom I have entered into the holiest of all bonds, because she is—an actress. Believe me, sir, that no settled allowance such as you propose, however extravagant, could compensate this young lady for an act of mine so heinous, so dastardly ; and believe me, moreover, when I tell you that the prospect of inheriting my father's riches and yours (for you have been generous enough to hint at this latter possibility) has less power over me than has one smile from the lips of my most dear Frances.

“But surely, my dear Uncle Roderick (though I have struggled to portray her in my letters to my father), you cannot even faintly imagine how beautiful a creature, both in mind and in form, I have taken to my heart. I met her in my hour of trouble in this manner :—

“My stay in this city, although beneficial to my health, was most disastrous to my pocket. The games of picquet and whist have always possessed so great a fascination

for me, that I needed little inducement to resort to them as a means to dispel my abundant leisure ; but, notwithstanding the careful tuition I had received in both these pastimes from my father and from my aunt Julia, I soon found myself regarded as the most unskilful player in all Bath. This ill repute, however, did not prevent my friends seeking me at the card-table, and despoiling me of my means. Thus the moiety of my father's annual allowance to me, which on my entrance into Bath I possessed intact, soon vanished, and I found myself in most desperate need. Shame prevented my sending a confession of my follies to my father, and so I determined to meet my difficulties, which the rapacity of my creditors contrived to deepen, by means of my own labour.

“In this plight I sought refuge in a mean lodging in an obscure portion of the city, without a penny in my pocket, and, at one dismal period, lacking even the ordinary necessities of life. Yet my industry was not at fault. I wrote several poems, which I proffered for publication to Mr. Huckle, a publisher here, whose illiberality and lack of breeding I shall always remember with contempt and scorn. Other effusions of my pen I tendered at different times to the *Bath Herald*, a newspaper much read in high society ; but I met with no success in this direction beyond gaining the kind encouragement of the editor. Armed with a quantity of my compositions, I actually trudged afoot all the way to Bristol (a place of considerable mercantile importance, where shipping is carried on), for the bent of my mind was to satiate the mental appetite of a busy city, rather than to tickle the enervated intellectual palates of idlers and invalids. Alas ! I found that the manner of my compositions was too refined for the coarse

understandings of that filthy city, and I returned disheartened.

"It happened that the poor apartment in which I lodged adjoined that of a young lady, who (as I afterwards discovered), noticing day after day my dejected air, took some interest in me, and gathered my history from my garrulous landlady.

"One afternoon, as I sat mournfully gazing from the window of my room, this lady rapped at my door, and desired most respectfully to speak with me. Upon my inquiring the nature of her business, she said—

"‘Sir, I tender you my most profound apologies for intruding upon you, but I feel sure that life is not dealing so generously with you that you will cavil at receiving a kind word from a stranger.’

"‘Madam,’ cried I, ‘a kind word is indeed comforting to me, though I confess I am at a loss to understand the motive of a stranger in tendering it.’

"‘Why is it,’ said she, ‘that we compel ourselves to receive slights and insults as matters of course, and yet search for a motive for small acts of civility?’

"‘With that she pressed upon me a large key, saying—

"‘I am leaving the house for a few hours. That is the key of my room, the room facing you, and I beg that during my absence you will sit at my table and partake of the poor repast that is laid there, for though the rules of propriety will not allow me to receive you nor you to entertain me, yet I consider that we should lose no permissible opportunity of being as friendly as possible.’

"Before I could utter a protest she had left me. I paced my room for some time in a state of doubt, and at length discovered two reasons for accepting this strange lady’s

invitation. The first reason was that, my poverty being so urgent, I had tasted nothing substantial for many hours; and the second, that the wondrous beauty of the lady’s face fired me with an inclination to improve our acquaintance.

"But not till I had partaken heartily of a very pretty meal, and had appeased my appetite, did I arrive at the conclusion that my fellow lodger, doubtless after acquainting herself with the full depths of my poverty, had insulted me by forcing upon me an act, not of ordinary neighbourly hospitality, but of common charity.

"In this unquiet frame of mind, and fortified by a better repast than I had partaken of for many weeks, I angrily quitted my fair neighbour’s apartment and lay in wait for her upon the staircase. In order that on her return she should not escape me I sat myself upon the stairs, and being drowsy, I suppose from over feeding, fell fast asleep.

"I must have lain in this state for a long time when I was awakened by the novel sound of the clink of money, and to my surprise I discovered my fair neighbour in the act of slyly dropping some small silver coins into the pocket of my waistcoat. My anger at this fresh indignity knew no bounds, and I should probably have proceeded to employ expressions of an unbridled character, had not the young lady burst into a flood of tears, and besought my forgiveness.

"‘Sir,’ cried she, ‘I beg that you will pardon me for my presumption. It is true that I have made myself acquainted with your poverty and, with a clumsiness which I am sure you will never condone, have sought to soften its pangs. But, sir, I too have suffered privation, and I claim the right as a poor sister, to whom the world has dealt out

more penalties than rewards, to sympathize with you in your trouble.'

"My irritation having now abated I felt overcome by the generosity of my new friend, and I kissed her hand with many expressions of gratitude. In the end she sat by my side upon the stairs and led me to detail the full history of my recklessness, my pride, and consequent poverty. She listened to me (though the draught of cold air upon the staircase was most bitter) with great gentleness and consideration, and learning from me that I had at hand a poetical play of my own composition, in which I had treated in novel fashion the heroes of the mythology, she begged me to allow her to submit it to the manager of the theatre here for his consideration. This led to my discovering that my friend was an actress of some promise in this city, whose fame had occasionally reached my ears, but whose performances upon the stage I had never had the delight of witnessing.

"Most gladly did I accept this young lady's offer with regard to my play, and in a short time, so ardently did she exert her influence with the manager on my behalf, it was performed at the theatre. Alas! the piece, which had cost me many weeks of anxious labour, proved utterly superior to the comprehension of the scanty audience assembled to witness it.

"I now felt completely heartbroken, and since I saw no way to extricate myself from debt but to appeal to my father, a step which my pride forbade me to take, I determined to serve our young Queen by becoming a soldier. But one afternoon whilst sitting besides Frances upon the stairs (which had become my daily habit) I was led to ask her whether in the event of my returning from war laden with honours and riches she could look on me with sufficient favour to become

my wife; upon which she threw her arms round my neck and protested that she would prefer to wed me in my poverty and trouble, so that her unselfish love for me should be above suspicion.

"And so, my dear Uncle Roderick, the same Frances is now my wife, and we are very happy. She labours as an actress, I as a poet, though I confess to her success being greater than mine. But this, my dear wife explains, is the natural order of things. A woman's triumphs, says she, die with the beauty (I am certain my dear girl's beauty can never fade), but a man's success is the reward of years, and it endures. I pray that I may become a rich man only that I may give Frances many servants and a carriage.

"When you read this history of my courtship and marriage, I am sure that the generosity of your nature will be my strongest advocate. But let me tell you, sir, that though my wife be an 'actress' (a title which my father is pleased to distort into a term of the most severe reproach), she is none the less a most gentle and Christian lady.

"Enclosed in this, I forward to you a lock of her hair. It is golden hair, and I send it to you, my favourite uncle, because I remember how you once took me upon your knee when I was a little fellow, and told me of your love for a lady whose hair was of such a colour—a lady who had died on her voyage out to Madras, where she was to have become your wife. I remember my childish wonder at the tears which stood in your eyes as you spoke to me, and I think that the sight of this golden curl from the head of a tender, loving woman may create in your heart a toleration for an ineffable passion, and induce you still to consider me

"Your dutiful and affectionate nephew,

"GEORGE ST. A—— R——"

Which proves that forty years ago young people most imprudently fell in love with each other, and married clandestinely. I wonder if this class of social misdemeanour is now extinct.

I have thanked the butterman for his consideration, and shall place the letter, with the poor lock of hair (now very faded and dull), amongst my little treasures.

By-the-by, Frances and her husband are both dead and gone, poor souls !



THE GHOST IN THE GREEN ROOM.

THE PROMPTER'S STORY.

By ROBERT REECE.



“**N**OT a bit of it !” said Parklemore, our “heavy lead.” “Why, I’ve known a story, myself, quite equal to *yours* ; which, I don’t deny is, perhaps, saying a good deal !”

“Possibly !” sneered Mr. Devigne. “There are plenty of ridiculous theatrical legends which pass muster for facts ; but very few men can adduce so well-substantiated a ghost story as that which I have just related !”

“My acquaintance with the aristocracy is necessarily slight and circumscribed,” remarked Mrs. Lumley Brown (our leading lady, with a tongue of her own, by-the-by !). “but, I think I have met somewhere with a romance—was it not in the memoirs of the late lamented Baron Munchausen ?—which, in many points, offers something of a parallel to Mr. Devigne’s excellent tale !”

There were several “sniggers,” scarcely suppressed, at this speech ; and, really, Mrs.

Brown’s rudeness was not inexcusable ; for Mr. Devigne’s ghost story, given with chapter and verse, and horrible plausibility, was too outrageous to be patiently listened to. Mr. Devigne was a new recruit in our company, which consisted of well-trying and seasoned actors and actresses, and didn’t altogether relish the affectations and monstrous conceit of this youngest member, whose qualification for our profession seemed to be wardrobe and cheek. I’ve been in my profession a goodish few years, and I own to my objections to these broadcloth and shirt-front amateurs, who, so far as I see and read, know more about every other art in the world than that which they honour by pursuing. Why, only the other day, I overheard a real criticism on one of these sweet young gentlemen’s performances. “Splendid, wasn’t it ? Grand ! the finest Mildmay I ever saw ; *did* you notice his trousers !”

Well, all this means that we weren’t, any of us, sorry to find young Devigne tackled by Parklemore and Mrs. Lumley Brown ; and to put that young gentleman down was the dear wish of *my* heart. When Parklemore spoke of a ghost story to “cap” Devigne’s he looked hard at *me*, and winked his O. P. eye tremendously, such was his power of facial expression, without disturbing the prompt-side lid. The fact is, I can spin as tough a yarn as most people when I’ve the chance and am in the humour, and Parklemore’s wink did the trick with me.

“It’s mighty funny,” retorted Devigne, “no doubt ! And what is your astounding story, Mr. Parklemore ?”

“It’s not *mystery*,” said our leading heavy, with a strong sense of justice ; “it’s Flagman’s !” This was putting it on to me with a vengeance ; but I looked becomingly grave, and remarked—“I am sorry, Mr. Parklemore,

that you should have referred to what cannot but be the occasion for disturbing sad reminiscences, which should otherwise have remained in the slumberous caverns of a sensitive soul!" There was quite a buzz of applause at this sentiment, which was, indeed, almost a verbatim quotation from a play expressly written for the late lamented Mrs. Thérèse de Tattersham, by a gifted M.P., who was too early lost to the Legislature and his country by abrupt interference on the part of his artful family, aided and abetted by the Commissioners in Lunacy.

"Bother the caverns of thing-um-bob!" said Mr. Devigne, with that want of real feeling for the sublime which is the besetting sin of his class. "What's the story about?"

"It's about a deceased friend of mine, whose terrible 're-appearance after his late fatal indisposition' overclouded a portion of my chequered life!" I responded; being, as the astute reader of these pages has already guessed, the Mr. Flagman in question, and prompter to our company. I think my poetical words rather knocked young Devigne over, for he only said, "Oh!" But, how Parklemore did wink! My eye! —I should say, his!

"Some years since," I resumed, copying as far as lay in my power the gifted tones of the late baritone actor, Scruffum; *not* in Westminster Abbey, by the way, but my good friend for all that, and possessing a capacity for keeping up his voice in Macbeth, and similar parts, which I have never heard equalled in these "piping times of pieces"—"some years since, when I was with old Grimston's company, and pretty well used to all lines of business; throwing the real legitimate, *i.e.*, the prompting part, in, of course; I came across, while we were travelling, one of the strangest characters

which (the present company always excepted) I ever encountered. Where Bancalari came from, what he had been, or what he was likely to be, were ordinary and not unnatural questions amongst us, from the first tragedy downwards. It was reserved for me, having always a heart ready to respond to the outcry of suffering or oppressed humanity (from 'Ursula the Undone,' 5 acts), to dive into Bancalari's secret. In our company, he was, strictly a *nobody*. He was 'cast' for dead soldiers, speechless guests, even 'outside shouts'; but never for a 'speaking part,' though such was his lowest ambition. Personally, I am above this; I have spoken some of the finest lines in the whole repertory of the drama!—for others!

"It's no joke, though, if you're ambitious, to be kept under; smouldering, so to speak, don't suit would-be inflammatory 'stars'; and Bancalari drooped, visibly drooped. To me, alone, did that broken creature confide his woes. He felt within him (it was about all he *did* feel, for he spurned food, as it were), a 'divine *hiatus*,' a craving to excel in the—what I may call—sepulchral parts in Shakespeare's plays. But it was not to be. The iron heel of tyranny was crushed upon his brow; (I quote from 'Dulacho the Dauntless'.) The man sank; when our company left Tembury, Bancalari declined to follow our fortunes. We haven't made 'em yet, by the way. He remained. But why? A chance opened for him, that's why! A weak-minded manager had taken the T. R., Tembury, for six months certain. Here was Bancalari, *residuum* of a stock company of renown. Distinctly, his chance. We were glad to hear of this, and we went our ways to the north, and Bancalari stopped in Tembury. Stopped altogether.

"It seems that the poor chap had made

up his mind to come out strong, and for that purpose had studied every principal part in the Shakespearian and legitimate drama. Judge of my, everybody's, horror, to read in the *Banffshire Banner* the ghastly tidings that Bancalari had hung himself (from a batten) two days after the new company had arrived at Tembury. Never mind about the details; the facts were, professionally, these: Bancalari had gained the lofty summit of his ambition. Ignorant of his speechless position in *our* company, the manager of the 'Meteoric Mummies' had cast him for no less a character than Guildenstern in 'Hamlet'; and Bancalari felt his importance to the quick. Unhappily, a bill-sticker (whose weakness in 'posting' programmes upside-down might have led him to more charitable and generous acts to another less publicly culpable) let out on Bancalari's real professional *status*, and the part was taken from him; officially, the character assigned to him was one of the bearers of Ophelia's remains. The generally grave atmosphere of Hamlet was too much for this bursting soul; and throwing up the part nature had written for him, he left the theatre and the world for ever. Poor Bancalari!

"Some two years afterwards, I, with a very different *troupe*, was back in Tembury for a fortnight's engagement. Terms were good, and both Screwer and M'Howler were with us, so that business was pretty sure. Odd to say, both low comedy and high tragedy stars objected to the engagement the very first night, and there was a regular shindy in the manager's room after the performance. The cause soon eked out. It appeared that when Screwer, made up for the farce, went into the Green Room, and, as he was accustomed to do, began to 'mug' in the cheval-

glass, a gloomy, pale-faced, seedy-looking personage suddenly showed himself behind the distinguished comedian, and with an expression of contempt beyond even theatrical hitherto experience, observed, 'Bad! low! not a bit like! could do better myself!' and incontinently left the apartment.

"Screwer never played so badly in his life, and never swore so successfully; but M'Howler's time had to come. While *he* was gesticulating before the glass, the apparition returned. 'Damned bad!' said the Ghost. 'Infernally bad! Bow, wow! not a bit like! not a *little* bit! *You* play Hamlet! Go home!' and once more the figure vanished. There was 'fits' for the manager next day, for it turned out that every one of the visiting company who had gone into the Green Room had been similarly insulted.

"Of course it all came to *my* ears, and somehow everyone soon knew of this outrage, and a watch was set; but next night the same trouble ensued. The 'starring' lady was sent into hysterics by what folk began to call 'the Ghost in the Green Room,' and really things were getting quite unpleasant, when it occurred to me to go and look the case up *myself*. I transferred the book to the under-carpenter, who knew the 'pulls,' if nothing else, and betook myself to the little Green Room. It was empty, for everybody was on in the last act of the drama, and I stared about. Suddenly I heard a sigh, and looking to the door, I saw Bancalari standing just inside the room, where his figure was reflected in the big glass. 'James!' I cried, 'James Banc—' I couldn't get another word out. I was downright petrified.

"'Yes, Flagman,' said Bancalari's ghost, in tones which our greatest living tragedian

cannot hope to rival. 'Yes, I am, or *was*, Bancelari !'

"I trembled like an aspen, but remembered Hamlet.

" 'Why do you trouble us ? What do you want ?'

" 'I want a "part,"' said the Ghost. 'I think I can play one now.'

" '*Now*, James ?' I faltered. '*Now* ? Why, Guilden—'

" 'Away with your Guildensterns ! I play the Ghost in Hamlet to-morrow night, or farewell to the fortunes of this theatre. *Here* I suffered, here I died. Here, too, I will revive the Shakespearian drama ! Which is it to be ?' and the spectre frowned remorseless. The tomb had produced in Bancelari that haughty indifference to everybody's feelings or convenience which marks, and will ever mark, the successful actor when living.

" 'James,' I said, 'we were ever on good terms whilst we were in that little company, and it would go to my heart to deny you a trifle such as you demand ; but how is it to be done ? I confess you are better qualified for the part you have so judiciously selected than any one I could name. But how is it to be done ?'

"At this moment the call-boy entered the room, and before a word could pass between any of us, the apparition had disappeared. I seemed to hear, however, a sort of sad whispering sound in the air like the word 'Remember !' and I shuddered. Next day I made a singular effort to accomplish my poor old friend's wish. I got up a little quarrel between our two leading men on the subject of tragedy acting, and the inevitable result was that the manager was obliged to put up 'Hamlet.' The rehearsals were brief, for we were all well-up in the

legitimate ; but, odd to say, at the last 'call,' our gentleman (old man) who played the Ghost of Hamlet's father was taken suddenly ill. This, I need not tell you, was by private arrangement with *me*. The manager was furious, so was the Hamlet. What was to be done ? Would they leave it to *me* to find a substitute ? Could it be managed ? I answered for it, it *could*. My friend, I told them, of the name of James Banks would essay the part. 'Will he *look* it ?' was the not unnatural question of the management. 'He *will*,' said I, shivering, 'remarkable !'

"I went into town ; my spirits were low ; I entered a retired hotel (where there was a bar), and while supporting worried nature against what was to happen that night, who should come in but Mr. Screwger, the dramatic critic of the *Tembury Times*. The idea occurred to me that that gentleman should be present, and place on record his opinions on the new 'appearance.' After the second glass he yielded to my request, and would take the trouble to be at the theatre, though he confessed to me that our leading gentleman's Hamlet injured his health severely, as much on its own account as because of the necessity for stimulants which it occasioned.

— 'Nevertheless, he would come.

"So did the evening, and M'Howler was in a pretty way with me. There had been no signs of anybody to play the Ghost, and I was regularly denounced by the lot. 'Mark my words,' I said, stubbornly. 'He'll be on the spot for his cue.'

"The curtain rose, and Francisco, Bernardo, Marcellus, and Horatio, were leading up to the entrance of the late King, when I noticed a blue light in the first wing, and there, looking as no ghost ever looked

before, stood James Bancalari ! The next moment he was on the stage.

* * * *

"To tell you how that play of 'Hamlet' went that night is beyond me. The alarm of Hamlet at sight of his father's spirit was about the best thing M'Howler ever did, and the Queen's fainting fit in Act III., Scene iv. was very like real. I went hastily to the Green Room. James Bancalari was there, lurid, but self-satisfied. 'There will be a notice of this performance to-morrow,' he said smiling; 'let what is said of me be written on my tomb, and I shall rest in peace.' I agreed gladly, for I was cold all down my spine, I tell you.

"The company all met next morning on the stage to discuss the new addition to the ranks. The *Tembury Times* was brought in. M'Howler seized it, and read aloud, as follows :—

"'There was little to call for attention or notice last evening, at our pretty little Temple of the Drama, seeing that the well-worn tragedy of Hamlet, with Mr. M'Howler in the part of the melancholy Prince, occupied the boards, and with the merits of both our readers are familiar. The company sustained their respective rôles with much effect. We must, however, take exception to the performer who attempted to play the Ghost. Neither by *physique* nor any other qualification was he fitted for the character—in fact, he was not in the least our notion of a Ghost, and we must chronicle what we believe to be a first appearance, as a complete failure.'

"There was a dismal wail in the air close to my ears, and a sort of rushing sound, and then silence fell upon us.

"'Poor fellow !' was our one remark.

"This was the first and last appearance of James Bancalari.

"His ghost was never seen again."

* * * *

"And you mean to tell me," said Devigne, "that a real spirit played in a real theatre? Then I don't hesitate to say that the whole story is a 'cracker' from end to end."

"I said I knew a story which could cap yours," said Parklemore, grinning.

A LEADING LADY.

By J. PALGRAVE SIMPSON.



O, sir," said Mrs. Harford to me in the Green Room of the Greathampton Theatre, "I am not such a fool as to follow in the steps of the traditionary leading lady, who is recorded to have complained indignantly to her manager, that she had been playing Juliet for forty years in his theatre, and then found a little dirty chit of a child put over her head into the part. No, sir, such a fool I am not ! I have not been in this theatre one quarter of those forty years : and I have no desire to play Juliet. But I must say that the constant preference shown by the management to this Miss Melrose—a mere novice—a mere inexperienced novice, sir—is more than I can be expected to bear in my position. It is very clear that either she must leave the theatre, or I."

With these words Mrs. Harford swept round the confined space of the Green Room, in her grandest attire, with a manner rather pettish and irritable, than profoundly dignified, as was probably her intention to appear.

I ought to explain, perhaps, that a lengthened stay with a friend who had a considerable estate a few miles distant from Greathampton had enabled me to establish myself as a sort of "tame cat" in the theatre, and to be on familiar terms with the whole company.

Mrs. Harford was indisputably the leading lady of the establishment; and it was generally whispered among the rest of the troop, that she presumed on this indisputable position to give herself "consummate airs." It cannot be denied that her manner was generally imperious, as becomes a leading lady, perhaps, but occasionally querulous also. She was in a querulous phase of temper just now—a state of mind easily accounted for; as I knew that she hated poor dear little Miss Melrose. Were not the youth, the beauty, the grace, the bright intelligence of the "juvenile lady," to say nothing of her obviously increasing favour with the public, quite sufficient to warrant the most justifiable feelings of hatred in the heart of the established and favourite actress, who felt (as, in a weak moment, she had previously avowed to me) that "she was having her nose put out of joint by the little minx"?

Mrs. Harford was a fine, handsome, very attractive woman. I should have given her some six-and-thirty years. Perhaps I should have been below the mark; for she herself admitted to thirty! She generally passed for a widow, although tittle-tattlers—and where does the genus abound if not in a theatre, especially a provincial one?—*would* insinuate, in their own little circles, that she had been separated from her husband on account of incompatibility of temper—the evil balance of the temper being of course, in the minds of the tittle-tattlers, entirely on

the side of the wife. What could be expected of a woman who "gave herself such unfounded airs?"

I was not inclined to acquiesce in the depreciation of pretty Miss Melrose, whose manners, as well as her appearance, had charmed me. So I, rather maliciously, fired off a small shot or two.

"Well! you must admit," I said, "that this girl, although a novice, has a great deal of lady-like grace."

"Lady-like grace!" sneered the angry actress. "Lady-like, forsooth! where did you discover that, I wonder. Why! the girl, as I know on the very best authority, is the daughter of a mere gardener—a mere common gardener! Like you men! spoony on her, I suppose!"

"Come, come," I resumed. "You cannot deny, Mrs. Harford, that you yourself have been spooned on, many a time, by a common gardener!"

"What!" shouted the leading lady, in her grandest explosion of stage indignation.

"Yes! when you played Pauline in the *Lady of Lyons*."

"Pshaw!" was the only repartee that the lady could find, as she stalked out of the room, qualifying her rudeness, however, by the explanatory remark, "I am called"—which she was not.

In a short time it came to my knowledge that very disagreeable reports were being circulated in Greathampton and the neighbourhood respecting Miss Melrose. She was denounced as a "designing hussy," "a vile, intriguing girl," and, even in some coarse mouths, as "no better than she should be." How these scandalous insinuations were first set afloat, it was, of course, impossible to prove. They gathered and grew, however, as does "*La calunnia*" always. But the

famous *colpo di canone* fell at last on my own head, when I found my own name mixed up with these scandals, and heard that I was pointed out among all the old maids of Greathampton as Miss Melrose's lover. I may as well protest at once that I had never shown the poor girl more attention than befits a gentleman to show to a lady, in whose society he finds himself.

I was profoundly vexed at all this foul scandal-mongering, although I did not see how to battle with it. There could not be much doubt in my own mind as to the source from which it had originally proceeded. Jealousy on the stage is still bitterer than jealousy in love; and jealousy is apt to be vengeful. I endeavoured to think that I was doing the leading lady a gross wrong in fixing on her as the originator of the scandal; but suspicion, spite of all my efforts, *would* grow until it assumed the shape of certainty. What should I do? I could not attack Mrs. Harford openly on surmises so vague; and yet I felt that it was imperatively necessary I should take some steps to defend the name and fame of a maligned girl, as well as to remove the stigma resting on myself.

This trouble was absorbing me as I sat in the library of Crawford Castle, where I was staying. A servant came in to tell me that Mr. Parker desired to see me. I begged that he might come in, wondering what he could have to say to me. Now, Mr. Parker had lately become the head-gardener at Crawford Castle, or rather the chief superintendent of the decorative portion of the grounds, and as such occupying the position of a man of science and an artist. I had seen him seldom, but had always looked on him as a gentleman.

To my surprise, as Mr. Parker entered, I saw that his face was flushed, his brow

darkly knitted. I bowed, and pointed out a chair to him; but he remained standing.

"It is with considerable pain," he said sternly, "that I feel myself compelled to address you, sir, on a matter at once awkward and delicate. Cannot you guess to what I would allude?"

I was puzzled; and I said so.

"Your name, sir," he continued in an excited manner, "has been connected, in a most disreputable manner, with that of a young lady—Miss Melrose—in whom I feel the strongest interest—no matter why. I would hear from your own mouth—you are a gentleman, and will speak the truth—what your relations with her may be."

I protested that my intercourse with Miss Melrose had been only dictated by delicacy and propriety. "And she—" I pursued.

He checked me with a gesture almost of defiance.

"I know her to be the soul of purity and virtue, sir," he interrupted. "She does not need your defence. I ask what your designs on her may be."

I had none whatever, I assured him.

"The scandals to which you allude have reached my ears," I added, "and, at the very moment you came in, I was devising in my mind the best means of refuting them."

"That shall be my task," said Mr. Parker, somewhat proudly.

"But your interest in Miss Melrose?" I asked.

"Is a perfectly legitimate one," he answered. "I cannot do otherwise than avow it to you now. I am her father."

"The father, I am sure, of as noble a girl as ever lived."

For the first time a smile passed over Mr. Parker's lips. He advanced to me, and,

not without some hesitation, held out his hand, which I grasped warmly, as I rose.

"I have given up a fine position," he continued, "and accepted that at Crawford Castle, in order to be near my daughter, who has chosen—not without my sanction—the stage as her profession. I am thus able to see her from time to time."

We sat down; and I could not refrain from detailing to him my suspicions as to the origin of all the scandalous reports. He could not understand me. "Why do you think this?" he asked.

"Is there any accounting for female theatrical jealousy, or its effects?" I said. "But I may be wrong—I trust I am so. Do you know this Mrs. Harford?"

"No," he replied. "From a foolish feeling of shyness, I have never visited the theatre; although my dear Emmy has often wished it. But I will go this evening."

After a while we again shook hands and parted, both of us resolved to sift the matter to the bottom, and to clear away the cloud on the name of the poor maligned girl.

It was long before I was able to make up my mind what steps to take; and it was only with considerable hesitation that I at last resolved to risk a bold measure, by seeing Mrs. Harford, and, in common parlance, "having it out with her"—but, necessarily, with all the caution and diplomatic tact I could command. I did not visit the theatre that evening; but, on the morrow I went over to Greathampton, determined to call on the illustrious "leading lady." I had done so before; and there could be nothing strange in a visit on my part.

Mrs. Harford had contrived to secure excellent lodgings on the ground floor of one of the prettiest houses in which "furnished apartments" were let in Greathampton. The

serving girl, who opened to me, said that Mrs. Harford was engaged. I told her I would wait. I sat down in the entrance passage, intending to compose my mind to the proper frame necessary for the delicate interview, in which I had embarked. But my attention was immediately aroused by the sound of voices in Mrs. Harford's room. They were female voices; and they sounded as if raised in considerable excitement. Mrs. Harford's deeper tones were easily distinguished. But those of the other? Surely it was the voice of the very girl, whom I looked upon as her victim! Yes. I could not be mistaken. It was certainly that of Miss Melrose. By a sudden unreflected impulse, I opened the door, and entered the room unannounced.

The two women stood facing one another. Mrs. Harford was flushed in countenance; and her eyes flashed. The girl was deadly pale.

The leading lady started as I entered. But, instead of displaying any anger at my intrusion, she turned on me with an air of triumph and defiance.

"So!" she cried, to Miss Melrose, "you have sent for your defender, it seems, my young lady"—I might use a coarser word, did I not fain to deify my lips with it—"a doughty champion, I can well surmise!"

"I was not aware that this gentleman would be present," said Miss Melrose quietly, but with indignation.

"I was merely paying you a chance visit, madam," I cried, somewhat angrily, almost at the same moment.

"Both in a tale, of course," sneered the leading lady.

"Perhaps, sir," she added, turning with her best manner of stage dignity, to me, "you will add to the obligation your flattering visit has conferred, by offering the girl your

arm, to conduct her from my house, where she has come with the evident purpose of outraging and insulting me."

"I had no such purpose," said Miss Melrose, firmly, but quietly. "I came only in a friendly spirit, to ask this lady's protection against some calumnies, with which I have been cruelly assailed."

"And of which I came here," I exclaimed, excitedly, "to seek the origin and source."

I fixed my eyes, as I spoke, with distinct meaning, on Mrs. Harford, who for the first time grew very pale.

She mastered herself, however, sufficiently to address me, with some degree of scorn, in the words, "I am not aware, sir, by what authority you interfere in matters which in no way concern you."

"Simply because my name has been coupled with that of this young lady," I answered.

"Young lady!" repeated the angry woman. "I wish you joy of being coupled in any way with the low gardener's daughter."

Simple Miss Melrose was now fully roused. Before I could speak, she answered the imputation with pride—

"My father is a gentleman," she said, with quiet dignity. "He was once a celebrated engineer. When his cruel wife deserted him and his young child, he left his home in trouble and agony of mind. He accepted a position in another sphere of life, which cannot be stigmatised as that of a 'low gardener'; and in that sphere he has achieved honour and renown."

Mrs. Harford grew more pale than ever. She gasped convulsively. Her eyes seemed

starting from her head; and she stammered, with choking voice, "Who are you, girl; who are you?"

As she spoke, a man had entered the room; and Emmy Melrose rushed to the protecting arms of her father.

"You ask who this girl is," exclaimed Mr. Parker, with energy—"she is your daughter, madam!"

Mrs. Harford gasped again, tried to speak, but collapsed utterly. She would have fallen to the ground, had I not sprung forward and caught her in my arms. It was no stage-acting this time. The revulsion of natural feeling had struck her down.

I was obviously out of place in this scene of domestic drama. So, after having placed Mrs. Harford on a sofa, I quietly withdrew.

I afterwards learned that Mr. Parker, in visiting the theatre, had discovered his wife, from whom he had been separated for years on account of her imperious and uncontrollable temper, and had resolved to meet her once more, and for the last time, in order to defend the fame of his beloved child.

It has not come to my ears that Parker and his wife have since recommenced their doubtful matrimonial life, with vows of reconciliation; but I have learned that the leading lady of the Greathampton Theatre now fosters Miss Melrose as a young genius, whose career on the stage must necessarily lead to the highest positions, "coaches" her with affectionate care in her parts, prepares her for fresh efforts with all the advantages of her own experience, takes in her progress an unbounded pride, and never has any longer the slightest fear that her "nose may be put out of joint by the little minx."



THE CRIMSON PETALS.

BY ALFRED THOMPSON.



Y story does not absolutely belong to the Foyer, but the first time I met Eva Steele was in the Green Room of the Happy Thought Theatre in the Strand.

I was passing through the room with the manager, who was promising with that frank and cordial air of his to produce a comedy of mine which was never meant to affront the glare of the footlights—in his theatre, at least—when I noticed standing before the glass, arranging the clinging folds of a satin dress, a tall graceful girl with golden hair and stone-blue eyes, the painted line round which intensifying the lashes, long enough almost to do without such aid, gave force to their effect, and advertised the heartless look the otherwise lovely face impressed on me. I had never seen Miss Steele before, and was then and there introduced to her.

She was understudying the star lady's part, and the star in question, Miss Cora de Quincey, having been suddenly attacked by congestion of the lungs, Miss Steele informed me, without a shade of pity for the invalid, that "thank God she'd got a chance at last, and that it served that horrid Cora right for her insufferable airs."

What was nearly death to poor Cora de Quincey, who had a mother and several brothers to keep, was such a chance to Eva Steele, that Jimmy Savage, the mildest man in spite of his patronym that ever graced Her Majesty's service, fell so insanely in love with her from his seat in the stalls, that she soon disappeared from the bills to become his wife. Colonel Savage was no chicken, and, what is more, was no fool; and yet the

glamour of Eva's marble eyes, the dazzling brilliancy of her metallic hair, coupled with an education she had received in one of the first schools at Brussels before her parents died, gave him no chance of analysing her character or allowing reason to interfere in his love affairs. Jimmy's heart was in his eyes, and as he looked in hers he only saw his own big manly soul reflected back, for she had neither love nor kindness in her nature. She was one of those women, as he found soon to his hurt, who must be conquering, cost it to others what it might. Her only desire was triumph for her beauty, her only satisfaction the pleasure of gratifying her vanity. Other hearts might bleed, other natures waste in grief: but if they bled for her, her pride was all the greater; if they wasted beneath her glance, her arrogance would be the more replete.

When I noticed the withdrawal of Miss Steele's name from the Happy Thought bills, and the absence of Jim Savage's smart figure from the Rag smoking room, I had no idea of connecting the two events. I had never met the young lady since; I had never seen the two together; but it was quite a year after that I met either of them again, and then I found they were man and wife. Wife and man much better describe the couple, as he was a mere slave, broken-hearted, as his silent gloominess seemed to indicate, while she was driving her triumphal car as usual with her husband sitting behind her.

I will tell you where I met them—it was in Madrid, at the *table d'hôte* of the Hotel de Paris. I had just arrived that morning from San Sebastian, and had been all day worshipping at the shrine of Velasquez in the picture gallery beyond the Prado. I had been translated to that heaven of painting, where Titian and Velasquez are the gods,

Murillo, Ribera, and Goya, the demigods, of art ; but though I had fed on æsthetics all the afternoon, I found an appetite for a sub-lunary *cuisine* by the time I had changed, and sat down to dinner. Two seats were empty on my right, when the soup came round, but were soon filled, to my astonishment, by Jim Savage and Eva Steele ; or perhaps I should now say by Mrs. Savage and her husband Jimmy.

When my old comrade and I had shaken hands—he was really glad to see me—I was introduced to the lovely Mrs. Savage, but was naturally discreet enough not to insist upon a former acquaintance, brief as it had been ; and indeed, I was not sure whether she remembered my face again, though she had not altered in the least. The same wavy, silken hair *à reflets métalliques*, like the Hispano-Mauresque faience in the Madrilene bricabrac shops—the same pale-blue eyes a baby Gorgon might have boasted—the same craving after conquest, were all there, and very much there, during dinner-time. Though no black line was round those eyes as in the Green Room of the Happy Thought, her brows and lashes were strongly tinted, and as she dropped her glances with a vacant innocence right into the pupils of the French and Spanish cavaliers at table, few of these impressionable southerners could resist the temptation to throw themselves under the wheels of the Steele triumphal car. She never ceased though we talked pictures, and she found the time to let me know she enjoyed the horrors of Ribera's tortured saints more than all, as quite a new sensation. The Frenchmen posed their utmost, the Spaniards even forgot their lighted *papelitos* in contemplation of this northern lily, and quite a flutter travelled round the *salle à manger* as we rose, preceded by this

golden vision, to take our coffee in the room above. The *salon* Savage and his wife had taken on the first floor had a balcony which overlooked the Puerta del Sol ; and there we lounged, watching the white-winged pigeons as they sailed through the air round the splashing fountain in the midst, or listening to the noisy newsboys selling their evening editions, or to the mule-bells as teams were shouted and sworn at by the drivers hurrying across the square.

From beneath our balcony came the whiffs of smoke curling from the everlasting cigarettes which seem never to quit the lips of your true Spaniard. Jimmy was consoling himself for his wife's neglect (for she paid no more attention to him now than she would to her groom ; not as much as to her maid) with a large cigar and a carafon of fiery brandy—I am sorry to say she had driven him to drinking. Mrs. Savage and I were leaning on the balustrade, both at our ease. She had tried to Juggernaut me by telling me with downcast eyes she had not forgotten how she had met me in the theatre some fourteen months ago, and how she had always regretted I was not at their wedding, which, indeed, had been quite private ; but finding that the seed her eyes were trying to sow had fallen upon harder ground than she expected, and finding, perhaps, the heat which still radiated from the walls about us too oppressive to allow of her insisting, we leant over and watched the groups below. At the well-known café where the athletes of the Plaza de Toros always meet—where Frascuelo may be seen in all the glory of his popularity, and Lagartijo may be heard firing off his jokes—where the gigantic *picador* exchanges cigarettes with some spoilt *chulo* or sends a flying compliment to some bright-eyed gipsy who may

chance to pass—a picturesque group of bull-fighters were standing or sitting at the corner of the building. Among those most prominent was a *toreador* whose distinction made him stand alone among his comrades.

The grace of the principals is remarkable among all the artists of the Tauromachic arena; their muscular agility and constant exercise, combined with a natural beauty of form, and with hands and feet proverbially small, give them the supple elegance of superior ballet-masters; but, as a rule, their features are marked by repulsive brutality, and their types are anything but prepossessing.

But the *toreador* in question was not only graceful as a Greek Apollo, but singularly handsome even for a Spaniard. He wore the fashionable undress of the bull-fighter—a dark myrtle velvet jacket trimmed with black braid, breeches to match, tight-fitting gaiters, and the round hat, with its silk *pompon*—so characteristic of all that is Spanish, worn by *majo*, or *maja*, Escamillo, Figaro, and even Carmen herself. The hair drawn back from the forehead terminated behind in the short plaited pigtail which distinguishes the profession, and to which is attached the silk *chignon* in full dress. As usual, the face was shaved except two short whiskers, which with the hair and eyes were black as a crow's wing, on which a bronze reflection adds brilliancy to the shade. His complexion olive, rendered darker by the whiteness of his teeth.

The *toreador* I learnt shortly after was a *sobre-saliente de espadas*, or super-numerary *espada*, or swordsman—the man who kills the bull after he has passed successively through the *chulos*, *picadors*, and *banderilleros*. His name was Salvador, and the story was current that he was a young man

of good family, who having in a quarrel had recourse to the *navaja*, the wound terminating fatally to his antagonist, had turned bull-fighter to escape pursuit. He was, though young, already well known to the Madrid public, and was often called on by name to kill the bull, even when Frascuelo and El Gordito were present as *espadas*.

Salvador was rocking himself backwards on a chair before the café doors, holding a glass of Manzanilla up in the air before him, when his eye caught the last rays of the sun reflected in a phosphoric halo round Eva Savage's beautiful head.

A start of pleasure sent a flush all over his face, only to be followed by a transient shade of melancholy, which seemed to say, "I might have once aspired to know that angel face, but now—*Ay de mí!*" The pang, if pang there was, soon gave way to the desire to pose. He threw his money about, paying for drinks and standing cigarettes. He chaffed the great Frascuelo till the *primer espada's* hand seemed to seek the trusty blade his pocket probably concealed; and the Puerta del Sol rang with his musical voice.

Eva, leaning on the iron bar before her, never took her eyes off him, and her basilisk glances seemed to exercise a magnetic power over the handsome Spaniard. Though she understood not a word of the ill-concealed compliments to Albion's beauties, which were freely bandied among the athletes below, and though we still conversed in snatches of dilatory dialogue about the latest news of London and Paris, a mute confederacy was being instituted between the two, which "becks and smiles" were fast converting into a flirtation. As we however had a box at the *circo*, a move was at last made, and we left the balcony, but not before Eva Savage

had taken out a yellow rose she had in her hair, and thrown it with a scornful gesture on to the pavement beneath.

In a country where the language of flowers is as well known as the fluttering of a fan, the yellow rose which was rapidly picked up by the delighted Salvador, meant only to him that she was married, but that he was loved.

Poor fellow ! if he had only known that love was an article she took no interest in when once her wheels had gone over her victim, he would have thrown the yellow petals of that rose to the pigeons round the fountain, or, still better, scattered them in the gutter at his feet.

The following day there was to be a *Fiesta de Toros*, in plain English, a Bull-fight, and we all settled to take places at once, and in spite of urgent remonstrances from a pretty American at breakfast, who declared it was too horrid for any woman to sit through, and was worse "than jobbing an Indian's eye out and sliding on it," Mrs. Savage declared her intention of witnessing the performance, and meant what she declared. Besides, the weather being splendid, the King was to honour the Royal Box, and the bulls on this occasion were to be the finest and fiercest of their breed. Colonel Savage's courier had secured seats not far from Royalty, and Frascuelo and Lagartijo were "underlined," as I heard Mrs. Savage remark, while Salvador was in reserve as *sobra-saliente*. It was to be a grand day.

We soon arrived, and led by our courier beneath sombre arches and through dark stone passages, we emerge on to a gallery, whence we enter a private box, in which cane-bottomed chairs do duty for stalls. We are in the shade ; that goes without saying,

as the sun is broiling the cheaper seats on the farther side of the arena ; and the flutter of fans all along the opposite hemicycle reminds one much of a cloud of butterflies hovering over a bed of flowers. I rather think some one of the chroniclers of bull-fights, Alexandre Dumas, Theophile Gautier, or our own Ford,—perhaps Lord Byron—had been already struck by the resemblance. It looks like nothing else, and therefore one may be pardoned for re-feeling the similarity. The orange-sellers are throwing up their golden fruit with unerring dexterity to any thirsty soul not content with *aqua fresca*, and the cigarettes are surrounding the groups of sportsmen and amateurs with a blue haze ; but I am not going to describe a bull-fight, at least not in detail. I must leave my readers, if they want an accurate picture, to go to any of the authors above mentioned.

Two or three bulls had been disposed of—*picado*, or goaded to madness by the picadors ; *banderilleado*, or larded with barbed arrows ; (*banderillas*, dressed up in cut paper and tinsel)—and finally killed with a blow of the sword by the *espada*, or put out of their misery, if not dead, by a stab from the knife of the *cachetero*. We had all of us, even Eva, got acclimatized to the unsportsman-like cruelties practised on the wretched horses, who in Spain are given up to the bull's ferocious gorings, their sufferings being part of the show, whereas in Portugal the owners show their address by preserving the poor animals from the horns of their enemy.

No horrors had been spared us ; horses had been ripped up ; all their internal anatomy had been spread to the winds ; and turn one's head away as one might, it was difficult to avoid the revolting sight. Eva, to my astonishment, not to say disgust,

seemed to take as much interest as any of the Spanish men or women present in the death-struggles of the agonized beasts.

She was a great success; all eyes and glances, when Toro was not *en evidence*, being flatteringly directed towards her. She certainly looked lovely. She had put on a rich black mantilla, which relieved the sunny gold of her hair, and made a star of her head in a night of lace; one yellow rose was on one side of her comb, and a large Parisian fan completed the picture.

Salvador had seen her, and had seemed, not only to her, but to the populace, as idling in the ring, so engrossed was he in contemplation of the "English angel," as she had been already nicknamed by the crowd. He had taken no part in the show, and had already had one or two observations thrown at him in the coarse chaff of the bull-ring. But his opportunity was coming.

Fresh horses had been brought in. The *picadores* had taken their places, lance in hand, on either side the ring. The *chulos*, with their bright red and yellow mantles, were waiting to spring over the lists, if the new-comer became too familiar. The iron gates of the *toril* were opened for the fourth time; and a rush of dust and gravel, with one of the doors torn off one hinge by a passing dig of the new bull's right horn, showed, if the ringing acclamations of the spectators had not proved it, what a wild beast had come upon the scene.

The new bull was a perfect model of what a gladiator bull ought to be—something between a rhinoceros and a greyhound—all muscle and weight before, all agility and nerve behind; coal-black, his coat shone like steel in the sun, and the only spots were the crimson ring round the bead-like eye and

the foam-flakes on his brawny chest. The *astas*, or spears, as the horns are called in bull *argol*, quite deserved the name; long, polished, and sharp as needles, they curved outwards and upwards on either side of his head with perfect symmetry. Lockhart's "Harpádo of Xarama" could not have been a finer subject for a sculptor; and when he stood still for a moment in the centre of the arena, he looked like Harpado—

"Like something molten out of iron, or hewn
from out the rock."

But in shorter time than it takes to write it, he has stabbed horse after horse to the heart with his vengeful spears. Five horses lie dead or dying in the ring, and still Toro seems as fresh as ever, as full of pluck, and as ready to avenge his breed.

The *picadores* had disappeared; the *chulos* had brought in new *banderillas* sparkling with gold and ribbons. Then Salvador stood out, and turning to our box with a slight motion of the head and eyes, which was responded to with haughty acquiescence by Eva, who felt herself a queen for the nonce, he took two *banderillas*, shorter by half than the usual iron darts, and preceded by a *chulo* carrying a chair which he balanced on one hand as he went along, he threw aside the dark blue *capa*, which had as yet half-hidden him, and walked gracefully forward, his lithe form perfectly fitted in a violet satin jacket, profusely covered with black chenille; violet breeches, bound round the waist with an amber silk scarf; shoes, and pink silk stockings, through which the blue veins on his small but muscular instep could be clearly seen; the costume completed by a dazzling white shirt, with low collar and pale violet tie, the usual tassel-covered cap on the head, and chignon of lace attached to the hair behind.

The bull was occupied spitefully prodding a dead horse in the sand, when the chair was placed almost in the centre of the arena, a little towards our side.

Taking his seat just as we had seen him the night before at the café, balancing himself backward and forward with his right foot on his left knee, and holding gracefully the two small *banderillas*, one in each hand, above his head, he seemed to invite the bull to a *cotillon*, so easy was his manner, so inoffensive his pose. The *chulos*, with their mantles floating behind them, tempted the great black brute away from his dead victim, until by short runs they brought him within range of Salvador. Then the bull, to his intense indignation, became aware of this man's temerity—actually sitting as carelessly as if he were on the Puerta del Sol, sipping his Manzanilla. Toro was disconcerted, and stood pawing the sand with his forefoot, while Salvador, lowering his barbs, coolly lighted a cigarette, and puffed the smoke into the warm air as he resumed his position. This was too much for Toro, who, bounding at the insult, promptly lowered his horns, and ploughing up the sand behind him, rushed at the charge towards his laughing foe. On came the bull, and still no motion but the easy balance of the chair, and the rising blue from the cigarette. In another instant he must be transfixed, when, quicker than thought, and with the grace of a dancing faun, the toreador steps aside, planting with the lightest certainty the two stings on either side the neck, behind the horns; at the same moment, the chair he had been sitting on a second before was sent revolving into the air to fall a mass of firewood in the arena. The cheers that roared into space were checked as suddenly, for Toro was not such a fool as he looked. He gave no further thoughts

to the chair, but, turning rapidly round, made a second charge at Salvador, who stood unconcernedly where he had fixed his *banderillas*. Turning round, he saw the bull coming, and taking one whiff at his cigarette, he threw it in the air; and as the bull came close up to him, he placed one foot between his lowered horns and sprang lightly over his flanks, before Master Toro had time to shake his ears. The shout of the entire ring of spectators was deafening, and as the bull paused to take breath, a unanimous cry went up for the *sobra saliente* to kill his adversary. Frascuelo himself brought him the sword, and the *muleta*, or red flag, with which he defies the bull. The grand brute, glistening with blood and perspiration, and looking more like bronze than ever, had partly wandered, partly been lured up to the side of the arena, close under our box. I cannot think it was not intentional; anyhow, there he stood, panting and defiant. After making his obeisance to the King, and throwing his cap into the air, the handsome young *espada* took his place in front of the bull—not six yards off his terrible enemy. The sword was raised to his eye, and the measure taken with the aim. The red flag was waved to taunt the angry beast, and twice or three times did he charge, to be baffled by a turn of the heel as Salvador adroitly eluded him.

And now the moment came for victory. The bull had faced him once again, and for the first time I saw the athlete's handsome face look up to our box, and his flashing eyes meet Eva's. With the grace of a grandee he kissed his swordhilt, and touched his heart with the hand that held the *muleta*, and a smile of coming triumph lit up his face. The red flag raised the wild bull's anger for the last time; down went the splendid head, and in went the sword, right through the spine. Salvador

was so certain of his *coup*, that he turned his head to send a kiss with his fingers to the English angel. The bull had just strength left to rise on one knee, and before he could escape the fearful spear-point of that murderous horn pierced the toreador's heart! A ghastly pallor came over his features; he took from near his heart the yellow rose he had picked up the night before. Its yellow petals dripped with blood—his heart's blood—and, with one ineffable look of love, he fell dead by the side of the bull. . . . We did not wait for more; even Eva's lip trembled, though I heard her mutter—"Fool!" I was very much disgusted to see her the same evening making eyes at a new *attaché* who had just arrived from Paris. She had quite forgotten Salvador!



HOW I ESCAPED A TESTIMONIAL.

By J. L. TOOLE.



HO is there in these days, when presentations are so much in vogue, that has not been testimonialized at some time or another. But there are few persons, I imagine, who, it having been proposed to confer the honour upon them, have escaped it in the manner that I once did.

It is with some hesitancy that I confess how long ago it was, so rapidly have the years been rolling on with me. To be frank, however, I think it was in 1856—pardon my blushing, gentle reader. I was at Edinburgh at the time, this being my first season in the capital which Scotchmen so love to regard as the "Modern Athens." The theatre was under the management of Mr. and Mrs. Wyndham, and I had acted in

the capacity professionally known as "stock low comedian."

At the end of the season I was offered an engagement at the Lyceum Theatre, then under the direction of Mr. Charles Dillon. Although I had previously acted in London, I considered this my first metropolitan engagement of importance. I was specially engaged to play *Fanfaronade* in "Belphegor," and Mr. Dillon himself was to sustain the title rôle, Miss Marie Wilton taking the character of the mountebank's son. The burlesque of "Conrad and Medora" was to be the after-piece, Mrs. Alfred Mellon, Miss Marie Wilton, and myself having to appear in it.

It would be interesting to reflect upon the many changes that have occurred since then, but I must return to my story. The company at Edinburgh—"quite unbeknown to me," as Mrs. Gamp would say—thought my removal to London a sufficiently auspicious circumstance to justify their presenting me with a testimonial. They determined to entertain me at a farewell supper, and give me some little article of value, in token of their friendship. The scheme was not to be disclosed to me until the evening before the event, when I was to be formally apprised of it.

But one night, at the conclusion of the performance at the theatre, I adjourned to a club where actors were accustomed to assemble. I there came into contact with Mr. F——, the second low comedian at our theatre, and Mr. B——, the "walking gentleman." We sat at a table together, and discussed various current topics over a cigar and a glass of wine.

In the course of the conversation, Mr. B——, evidently off his guard, incautiously remarked—

"Well, Toole, that will be a very pleasant affair next Thursday night."

"What affair?" I innocently inquired.

"Oh," continued he, "when we give you that supper and gold——"

Before he could conclude his sentence, I noticed a sharp and decisive movement on the part of Mr. F——, and instantaneously the features of the "walking gentleman" aforesaid underwent the most marvellous change I ever beheld. Instead of the genial man he generally looked, his face assumed an almost demoniacal aspect, and he gave a tremendous yell. I rose in alarm, and for a moment thought the poor fellow had gone mad. Regardless of this, Mr. F—— wrathfully exclaimed—

"You stupid fool! You should not have told him anything about it yet!"

Mr. B——, rubbing his shins, and obviously in great pain, shouted—

"Confound it! The supper and the pencil-case may go to the devil for me! I'll have nothing to do with it."

"And I, too," retorted Mr. F—— angrily, "will wash my hands of the whole affair."

The secret thus came out. I discovered that Mr. F—— had been appointed treasurer of the Testimonial Fund, Mr. B—— also having taken an active share in the project. Mr. F—— was so annoyed at his colleague's indiscretion that he had given him a terrific kick under the table. Mr. B——, unfortunately, had a bad leg, and this accounted for his extraordinary outburst.

Without any previous rehearsal, Mr. B—— appeared in a new character—that "of *limping* gentleman"—for several days in the streets of Edinburgh; so much had the kick hurt him. When questioned respecting his lameness, he explained that it was all through

"that Toole testimonial." His indignation was only equalled by that of Mr. P. F——; the one resented the kick, and the other the premature divulging of the secret. Mr. F——, as treasurer of the fund, carried out his threat, and did "wash his hands of the whole affair."

In consequence of this, the movement became a failure, just in the same way that a party does when somebody has the measles, or a birthday comes at an inconvenient season. The result was that I left Edinburgh without any testimonial, though I am sure that I carried with me the hearty good wishes of all my Scotch friends.

THE TWO DROMIOS.

By CHARLES WARNER.

"H, then, I presume you are an actor?" "Yes, I am taking my company on a provincial tour, and we open at Southampton on Monday evening." "And the play?" "Hamlet." "Oh, yes, Hamlet. Ah, remember seeing Kean—the elder Kean I allude to, the great actor genius; I shall never see his like again, I assure you. What grace! what fire! what terrible force! And his eye, sir! Ah, what an actor! Never see his like again, sir, never!"

The above conversation took place in a railway carriage, as I was travelling from Edinburgh to Southampton; rather a long and tedious journey, but I was used to the life, and I was young, my heart and soul in the profession I had adopted. My travelling companion was an elderly gentleman, I should imagine of about sixty-five years of

age; a delightfully hale and hearty old man, whose years were frosty, but with a kindly face.

"Are you staying long at Southampton?" he inquired.

"Not more than three or four weeks, at most," I replied.

"Ah, then, I may have the pleasure of seeing you during that period. I am very fond of the stage, although I seldom enter a theatre now. I am going to Southampton on a visit to my brother, whom I have not seen for five years. Five years!" and he repeated the words as though some sad memory had crossed his mind.

I did not venture to interrupt his reverie, and we remained silent for a few minutes. At length he broke the silence by remarking that he was afraid his visit would not be without some pain, as there was a sad cloud hanging over his poor brother's life.

"Indeed!" I remarked. "I regret extremely to hear it, but doubtless your presence will disperse the cloud, and bring sunshine into your brother's home once more."

"Ah, I fear not, my young friend. You see, my brother's daughter, Miss Douglas—"

"Douglas!" I said, inquiringly. "Indeed, how strange! I have letters of introduction to a Mr. Vere Douglas, of Queen's Square. Can it be the same?"

"Why, really, how extraordinary! Vere Douglas is my brother," replied my friend. "And now, young gentleman, may I ask your name?"

"My name is Henry Pierpoint. I bear letters of introduction to your brother from some very old friends of his—the McAlpines of Edinburgh."

"To be sure—to be sure! McAlpine—Fred McAlpine! Bless my heart, we were

boys together! And you have just left them, eh? God bless me! Are they well? Dear, dear me! it makes me feel a boy again! You must come with me to my brother's to-night; he will be delighted to hear and see a friend of Fred McAlpine. School-boys together, sir—schoolboys!" and the old gentleman seemed for a moment to forget the cloud that overhung his brother's household in the new-found companion of the friend of his youth.

At length I ventured to remark it might not be convenient, at so late an hour, to make a call, as we should not arrive till half-past nine, and Mr. Douglas might not care to receive a visitor at such an hour.

"Ah, my dear young friend, my brother would only be too pleased to see any friends of Fred McAlpine; but, you see," and he paused abruptly, "his daughter Ada! Ah, sad story—very sad story! Love affair, my dear boy! Poor girl! poor Ada! Ah, sad affair!" and the old gentleman relapsed for a few moments into thought again.

After some few minutes' awkward silence, I ventured to make some remarks respecting the weather, as I perceived the snow had commenced falling very heavily, but I received no reply. At length, thinking possibly my fellow-traveller wished me to make some remark on what he had told me respecting his niece, I said, "Miss Douglas, I trust, is not—"

I did not finish the sentence, for he caught me up rather sharply by saying, "I have not seen Miss Douglas since the sad misfortune befell her; but, Mr. Pierpoint, as you are about to make my brother's acquaintance, I may as well tell you the story. I recount it as briefly as possible:—My niece Ada, two years ago, was about to be married to a man to whom she was passionately

attached. My brother was very fond of the stage, as was his daughter; and during the winter months they had several amateur performances at their house. Among other visitors was a Captain Raredon, who was an extremely good amateur actor, and a man calculated to fascinate a young and impressionable girl. This man won Ada's heart, and was accepted as her future husband, and the marriage was arranged. The morning arrived for its celebration. On that very day my brother received a mysterious communication stating the marriage of his daughter must never take place with the man who assumed the name of Captain Raredon, for reasons which, within a few hours, the writer would explain in person. Within an hour of starting for the church, a poorly-clad woman presented herself at my brother's house and demanded to see him. She then disclosed to him, before his child, that she was the deserted wife of the man calling himself Captain Raredon. That very day he was arrested for forgery, tried at the assizes, and sentenced to five years' penal servitude. This terrible blow upon poor Ada laid her for months on a bed of sickness, from whence she arose restored in bodily health, but her mind, alas! was gone. She always expected the man Raredon to return to make her his bride. It was always the wedding morning for her, and she was waiting for her lost bridegroom to return. All these painful disclosures were written me by my poor brother shortly after Ada's illness. I was at that time in Gibraltar."

"Indeed! indeed! this is a sad story, Mr. Douglas, and I could not think of intruding upon your brother's privacy to-night; to-morrow I will call and pay my respects to him, and shall only be too happy to renew our acquaintance."

I had hardly finished the sentence when the guard called out Southampton, and I knew we were at our destination. Mr. Douglas shook me most cordially by the hand, and we parted, he making for his brother's residence, I for my apartments in the High Street.

True to my promise made the previous night to my new-found friend, I started after rehearsal next morning to present my letter of introduction to Mr. Douglas. I arrived at the square, and was surprised to find all the houses very fine Elizabethan-looking buildings, quite palatial in their appearance. At one of these residences, at the number indicated in my letter, I knocked; in a few seconds the door was opened by an elderly female, who, the instant she observed me, uttered a faint scream, and I believe would have fallen had I not stepped forward and placed my hand upon her arm. She recovered herself immediately, and said hurriedly, "For heaven's sake, sir, what do you come here again for?" and surprised and bewildered at this extraordinary reception, I was about to ask the meaning of it, when a door opened at the end of the hall and a white-haired old gentleman emerged, and came to learn what the cry of the domestic meant. No sooner had he perceived me than he muttered faintly, "Good God! how came you here, villain?" I need not say I began to imagine I had made some terrible mistake, and had come to some mansion usually assigned to persons who had lost their reason. "This must be a lunatic asylum," I said to myself. I was about to inform my star-gazing friend that I was sorry I had unintentionally disturbed them; but I had made some blunder in the address, when suddenly my travelling companion of last evening came forward and rescued me from my painful position by saying, "My dear Vere, what is the matter? This is Mr. Pierpoint,

the gentleman of whom I was speaking last night, and who is a most intimate friend of Fred MacAlpine's. I told you he bore letters of introduction to you."

The old gentleman addressed as Vere stood staring at me aghast for a moment or two. At length he said, "Heavens! how wonderful! I could have sworn it was Raredon returned. Pray forgive me, and walk this way."

I followed the astonished Mr. Douglas into a delightfully furnished apartment, replete with every comfort. No sooner had I entered the room than my astonished host turned round and stared wonderingly in my face.

"Marvellous! marvellous! Forgive me, sir. My brother has told you the sad story connected with my poor child, and I daresay you must think me almost insane in behaving thus to you, but your remarkable likeness to the man Raredon has positively alarmed me to such an extent, that I hardly knew what I was saying or doing."

This, then, explained the whole mystery. I was the Louis de Franchi to Captain Raredon's Fabian.

After mutual explanations, Mr. Douglas suggested that I should see his daughter; and as I was most anxious to do so, I immediately assented.

"My dear sir, my poor Ada is perfectly calm; the one thought uppermost in her mind is the return of her lost husband, as she constantly calls the man Raredon. If you will pass this way, Ada is doubtless in this room."

We passed through a small door leading into another large chamber, and there, sitting at the piano, her fingers running listlessly over the keys, sat a lovely girl, apparently not more than twenty-three years of age.

Our entrance alarmed her, for she arose immediately, and fixed her eyes on me. "She neither blushed nor shook, but, deathly pale, stood grasping what was nearest." Then, in the words of Elaine to Lancelot, she cried, "I have gone mad; I love you. Let me die." Then the poor child, uttering a low moan, fell prostrate to the ground.

We raised her gently, and placed her carefully in the arms of her kind nurse and companion, the old lady who admitted me into the house, and at whose astonishment on beholding me I now perfectly understood.

Need I tell you the sequel, reader? Gradually Ada's reason returned; gradually I learned to love her, and my love was returned a thousand-fold by her whom afterwards I named "Elaine the Fair," "Elaine the Lovable, Elaine the Lily Maid of Astolat."

At the termination of my engagement in Southampton I was compelled to return to Scotland for a brief period, and in the spring we were married; and I have had reason to bless again and again the happy chance that moulded my features, though not my mind, like the twin Dromio.

"SAMBO."

BY THE HON. LEWIS WINGFIELD.

T is pleasing to consider that this is, on the whole, a just world—a world of tit for tat and give and take—wherein we claim a right to possess ourselves of an eye for an eye or a tooth for a tooth, to give carte for tierce and kick for slap, and generally to

"hold our own" in a proper and independent sort of way.

It is a humble and meek, if occasionally soaring, figure painter, in whose mouth butter would decline to melt, that is moralizing in this manner—one who, curiously enough, is given to theorize about things in a bellicose and aggressive fashion, of which you would not deem him capable; but who, if driven into a corner, with no policeman by, would no doubt accept, with a feeble and sickly smile of deprecation, as many thumps as you thought fit to give him, without the smallest effort to retaliate. Well, you see, there must be people like that, mustn't there? There must be samples of all sorts—people of action, people who dream, people who plan, people who persevere, people who carry out the plans, people who pretend to, but don't. Now I—you had best know it at once—am one of the dreamy lot, but that's no reason why I should not admire in others that which I can't do myself, is it?

I'm not above being taught by anyone; would thankfully receive a lesson from the dustman, or accept with bowed head a hint from the crossing-sweeper. There's no false pride about me. Even dumb quadrupeds and fishes can teach us something often, and provide us with pabulum for instructive meditation. There's my raven now. He's only a biped, but, my! what a clever bird. *Think*, indeed! he's a mine of thought, with a clear and wholesome notion, such as does him credit, of returning a Roland for an Oliver.

This sable fowl of mine (christened Sambo by affectionate god-parents) is, after the fashion of his betters, given to likes and dislikes. For some reason of his own—no doubt an excellent one—he took a violent antipathy to Sophonisba.

Who's Sophonisba? Great powers! how ignorant people are who make a parade of appearing well-informed! Sophonisba was my favourite model. She and I were the best of friends. She was the flint and I the steel. Together we were wonderfully brilliant. If an idea came into my head, I had but to hint it to Sophonisba in the abstract, and there it was portrayed in action—concreted. "The Massacre of the Innocents," for instance. Mother wailing over child with throat cut; distracted parent picking up the pieces. Bless you, there it was—Sophonisba's hair was down in no time; her spinal cord all of a quiver with maternal frenzy; her eyes glared out of their sockets till your blood ran cold to look at 'em, while her fingers were tight clenched and her teeth set. Talk of Delacroix and his Medea. Pooh, sir! Fudge! If I had only painted all the grand historical works which Sophonisba and I planned out together, my fortune and reputation would have been made long since; but somehow or other we occupied so much time in the discussion of this attitude and that motive of drapery, that the day was past and Sophonisba exhausted before I could get to work, and somehow or another the said *chefs d'œuvres* never grew into more tangible form than Sophonisba's suggestive poses. Whilst we were arguing and wrangling over our subject, that blessed bird used to sit with his head on one side and a white film over his eyes, watching us; and I verily believe that he was convinced he could do it all better far than we did, for he used to give a contemptuous croak after a while, and go waddling off out of the door and down the garden path, with a grin all down his spine; and spreading out his wings to the sun, and twisting round his head till it seemed as if he were trying to wring it off, perform an

intricate and independent pose plastique upon his own account for his own private delectation and amusement. And so, you see, as they became in some sort rivals, Sophonisba and that fowl grew to hate each other with a mortal loathing. She got a fancy that he was bewitched, and really grew quite frightened of the bird, for his manners were diabolical, and there was a fiendish cunning in his eye. Sometimes, when she was posing and I at work, both of us silent and fatigued, and intent upon our labour, buried in our own thoughts or listening to the distant hum of bees and insects in the garden, she would make me jump (I always was a nervous man), by giving vent to a loud yell. Then I would lay down my palette, and scratch my head with vexation, for how's a man to do good work if he's to be startled out of his life? And then she would begin to cry, and declare she couldn't help it, for the devilish fowl had crept up unawares, and having selected a plump and tender spot, had plunged his beak into her leg. That he should have cultivated such bad habits was trying, I admit, and this was a trick he was very fond of playing off upon his enemies. A raven's beak is very sharp, and it is not quite pleasant to find it suddenly inserted under your tendon Achilles, or wedged in between the muscles of your calf. You didn't forget it for a week, I can tell you; so there is little wonder that Sophonisba wept.

But Sophonisba, if not as full of resource as was her foe, was gifted with a spirit of her own. When resting from work, she would lay traps for her astute enemy, lure him to her with caressing blandishments backed up with scraps of meat, and when he had incautiously hopped within distance, she would give him such a kick as sent him staggering, and tumbling, and screeching to the

extreme end of the big studio, where he would sit awhile gasping for breath, pluming his feathers, and recovering from his surprise, whilst planning occult revenge.

Sophonisba and I had many a tiff over that fowl, which simmered at last into a real quarrel. Coming into the room suddenly one day, I was aware of a mighty bustle, and was pained to catch my model—*flagrante delicto*—in an act of deliberate cruelty. She had tucked up her sleeves and skirts, so as to give her malignity free play, had driven the bird into a corner, and was belabouring him as hard as she could with blows from my sturdy maulstick. It was lucky I came in when I did. The wretched Sambo was huddled into a ruffled bunch of feathers; his beak was open; the film rose and fell over his eyes like the shade of a policeman's lantern; he had not so much as a grunt left in him.

"For shame, Sophonisba!" I cried, in indignation. "You've nearly killed my poor innocent pet!"

"I wish I had—*quite*," was the sullen rejoinder of that ill-conditioned female.

Yes; scales fell from before my eyes. I perceived evil traits in her such as I had before been blind to. Little by little the conviction dawned on me that the favourite model was more than vulgar and red-nosed. She was a *thief*! There could be no doubt about it. Alas! alas! I laid snares, placing with seeming carelessness valuable nicknacks within her reach. She pocketed them. It is very sad to be disillusioned. Our dolls are all stuffed with straw, of course. Sophonisba had an itching palm and a thirsty throat, and was, moreover, a picker-up of unconsidered trifles. It was kleptomania—a disease—I argued to myself. The poor, misguided lady could not help it! Some-

how, it was always the most precious things that she took. There was method in her madness. I could not bear it any longer. In the throes of exasperation I flung scathing words at my old friend. The raven, conscious of uproar, withdrew his head from under his wing to deliver an appreciative, if sickly, croak. Sophonisba drew herself up, and put on her clothes with a haughty dignity, such as I should never have supposed her capable of. Refusing the proffered seven shillings for the sitting, she flounced out of the studio, swearing by the bones of a deceased parent to set foot within my place no more.

"It was admirably acted!" I observed grimly to Sambo, who, recovering his spirits as soon as her back had vanished, was pluming himself in triumph upon a chair rail. "It was all very well, wasn't it, Sambo?" I cried aloud, "to spurn those humble shillings with the air of a captive princess. Those little jewelled pouncet-boxes are worth more than shillings, ain't they? and the old-fashioned watches with which she has walked off from time to time. She is a thief, Sambo, my boy—a common pickpocket! How low!"

Sambo winked his eye, and croaked, "She is!"

Reproachfully I raised a finger and improved the occasion. "You know," I said, "that you were the first cause of her disgrace. But for her conduct to you, I never should have seen her faults. Ignorance is bliss. It behoves you to be sorry, not triumphant. You ought to be ashamed of yourself."

Still that smile hung around his beak. Sambo showed a contemptible spirit of revenge. He was incorrigible and I disgusted.

Time passed, and I missed Sophonisba more gruesomely day by day. I was at work

on an important canvas for the Academy—"Diana surprised whilst bathing."

I tried every model in London—in vain; none of them could assume that pose of modesty—that *je ne sais quoi* about the hips was Greek and Chaldaic to the idiots. I ground my teeth and wore out my heart over my hopeless task. It grew as plain as the nose on my face (all my family have fine noses) that my Diana was not, after all, to electrify the artistic world. A friendly critic (the fool!) even begged me to begin something unambitious at the last moment. The torso was absurd, he said; it was put on crooked—didn't fit on to the legs. I could have kicked him with pleasure out of window. As if I didn't know all about a torso, and how it should fit on to legs! Had I studied anatomy for nothing? I deigned, however, to explain that Sophonisba—the well-known, the celebrated Sophonisba—had given me at the first sitting the most suggestive and marvellous movement of coy modesty. It was Diana herself (so long as her face was hidden, and the red nose). There was a poesy in each suave line—a poem, sir, an epic! I vowed, in the enthusiasm of my regret.

"Then why did you change your model?" that stupid critic asked.

Why, indeed! I pushed Sambo from his perch with wrath, and he fluttered all sideways to the ground. "You beast!" I hissed at him, "you pig! but for you—" and then, so soon as I was left alone, I sat down to indite a letter in the interests of art. I humbled myself to Sophonisba—grovelled—bowed my forehead in the dust before the peccant damsel. I would forgive the past, I wrote. It was my own fault that she should have sinned. It was not right to have thrown temptation in the path of a poor girl. For

aught I knew to the contrary—whilst I was lavishing my gewgaws on the tables—she had tiny sisters to clothe and keep and feed—brothers who clamoured for shoes—whose over-darned garments were a laughing-stock to the School Board! She borrowed my little trinkets, and pawned them for their sakes. New socks, new knickerbockers grew out of the pouncet-boxes and the watches. Juvenile hunger was assuaged, and infant gastric juices were permitted to do their work. I was glad that it was so, for of what use was the trumpery to me? Socks and stout shoes for the indigent are better than bric-à-bac; good shirts of calico of more account than pouncet-boxes! If Sophonisba would only throw a veil over the past, return and give me that hip-movement for Diana, all should be forgotten and forgiven, and I would promise in the future to lock my valuables away.

"The quality of mercy is not strained. It blesseth him that gives and him that takes. 'Tis mightiest in the mightiest!" I declaimed the fine speech reflectively to Sambo, who, no longer smiling, had returned to his position on the chair-rail. He glowered crossly, and made weird gurgles in his throat. In good sooth, he was an evil fowl. For two pins I would make a present of him to a friend. Could *he* give me that attitude for Diana? Of course not—useless brute! And yet, like many another futile bit of goods, he had sown dissension between two worthy people who were of mutual value one to the other. But it was most wrong in the woman to have beaten him so, for, if wearing, he was droll. I smoothed his feathers with an indulgent palm; but he shook it off disdainfully, and even dared to make a snap at me. Well, well! I was apparently not destined to please anyone. I was a failure.

There is nothing like work to soften carking care. If only Sophonisba would return, I could put right that faulty movement of the hips, and then should triumph in the Academy—be dubbed R.A. upon the spot. The critics would gush forth in deserved praise: "Never has it been our advantage to see the human figure better drawn; the twist of the lumbar vertebræ is a miracle of management; the dimple caused by the slight rotary motion to the left is—and so forth, for a column and more. I had waited long. So did Delacroix, and Millet, and dozens more who were geniuses. But appreciation crowns toil at last. It's merely a matter of perseverance. If Haydon had not committed suicide—but pshaw! of what use are ifs? Three mornings in the week with Sophonisba, and then—and then——!"

The postman called. What an atrocious rattle! Eh? a letter without a stamp, sealed with a door-key, and adorned with grimy thumb-marks. Miss Sophonisba "presented her respects, and could not think of obtruding any more where that beastly bird was. Though a poor orphim, with no father nor mother that she was aweer on, yet she had her feelinks. Thief, indeed! A lot of dirty rubbidge that she would not have at a gift. Never no more, sir, would Sophonisba demean her feet by stepping into that there studio. If insulted, she had pride, thank Goodness! and if *other* people did keep devils as gnawed honest people's legs, and then were imperent into the bargain, she would have no carryings-on with 'em. Miss Sophonisba was a-goin' to 'Erne Bay for the 'olodaise, and didn't want to be bothered any more with gents as couldn't behave."

So the dream of ambition was over. Sophonisba was pitiless. Then came reaction. Rage succeeded to despair. Doubtless it was

better as it was. Diana would be handed down to posterity a glorious fragment, like the Elgin Marbles or the Torso Belvidere ; but, at any rate, I should not have offered a premium to vice. Why ! I had actually been on the verge of compounding a felony ! Newgate loomed in the distance—Millbank—Portland ! I was bathed with guilty perspiration at the horrid vision. Yes, yes ; I had stood on the brink, but stopped while there was time. *Tout était perdu fors l'honneur.*

Sambo, frightened by the rat-tat of the postman, had scuttled off the chair and retired to his fastness in the garden. Whatever was he about, the comical, quaint fellow ? Distressed in mind as I was, I could not but watch. He was gyrating round and round a bush with a gobble-gobble. He was playing at being a turkey with influenza. He was vastly amused with something—perhaps was cracking internal jokes at my expense, delighted that I had been snubbed by Sophonisba. Round and round he stalked with protruded neck, and toes turned out, as though performing some mysterious incantation. How bright his eyes were as, now and again, he cast a gimlet glance at me over his shoulder ! How saucy was the glance ! how tinged with mockery ! Absolutely he

was bursting with suppressed merriment. He was shaking both his sides—I mean his wings.

All at once he plunged headforemost into the bush, with a giggle—so deep into the centre of it, that there was nothing to be discerned but the tip of a black tail wagging, and a symphony of splay feet beating the air. Now he was playing at gravedigger—what an uncanny beast !—throwing up the earth with skilful bill. What, in Heaven's name, was this ? Something that glittered. My watches, one by one—my valued trinkets—were tossed, with a derisive gurgle, at my feet !

I saw it all. This was the fowl's revenge. Sophonisba had beaten him well-nigh to death, and then he had turned the matter over in his mind as to how to eject her from the establishment. He had put two and two together, and had succeeded in his fell design.

Vainly did I apologize to the injured lady. Vainly did I even offer—for the sake of Diana's figure—to sacrifice the offender as a peace-offering. She didn't answer—is still sojourning, maybe, at Herne Bay. Alas ! alas ! Diana remains unfinished. Sambo rules the roast—master of me—and of the situation !

THE END.



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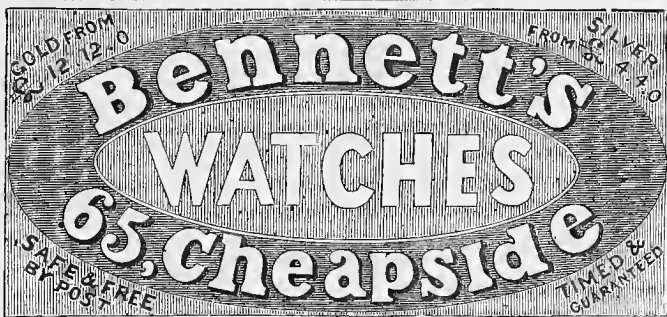
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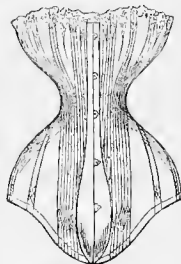
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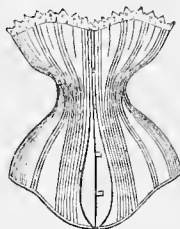
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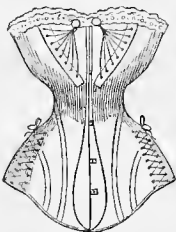
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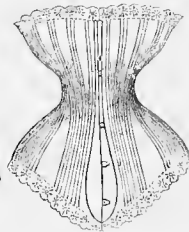
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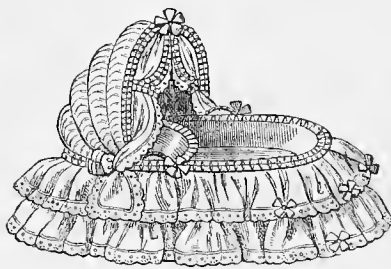


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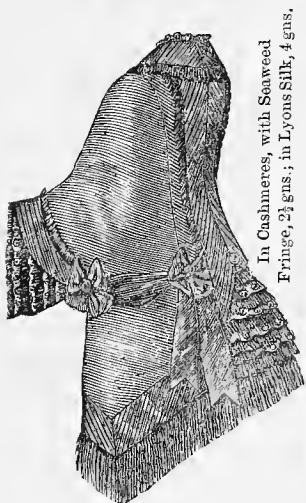
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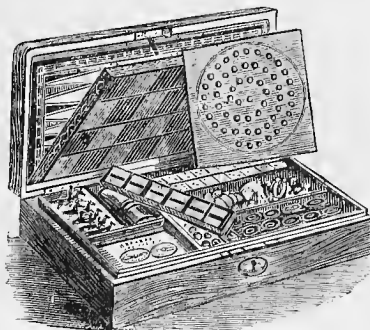
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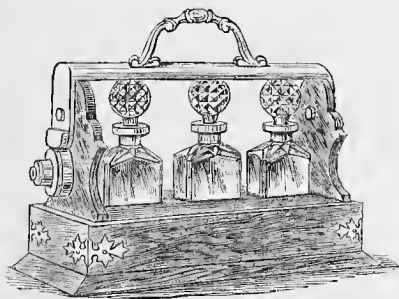
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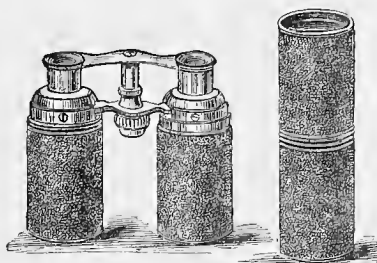
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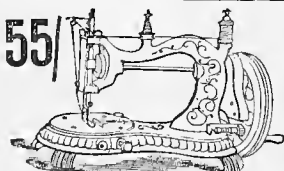
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A PROLOGUE.

THE curtain rises, silence falls,
And minds attuned to gloom or wit,
Give expectation to the stalls,
And anxious faces to the pit.
In plays of ancient Greece we found
A form that after time forsook ;
Still I, your Chorus, must propound
The argument that guides our book.

A garland of old memories ;
Tales of romance and kindliness ;
Grief's calendar ; exultant cries ;
Heard up the mountain of success ;
The hate that dies, the loves that live,
The fun of which we never tire—
These humble gifts we freely give
To friends around the Christmas fire !

The young beginners, struck with fright,
Demand your mercy on their knees ;
But if I guess your thoughts aright,
You'll spare such favourites as these.
If there be error, mine's the blame,
Who forced on them a novel part ;
I think you'll cheer them all the same,
And Chorus thanks them from his heart.

Toil is a pleasure when we know
The sympathy that friendship sends,
And Chorus gratefully can show
A tried companionship of friends.
We most of us play many parts,
But let us thank this merry age,
That there's one DOOR to all your hearts,
And we have entered it—THE STAGE.

October, 1879.

C. W. S.

THE STAGE DOOR

EDITED BY

STORIES
BY
THOSE WHO
ENTER IT.

CLEMENT W. SCOTT



ROUTLEDGE'S CHRISTMAS ANNUAL



THE
STAGE DOOR:

STORIES BY THOSE WHO ENTER IT

EDITED BY

CLEMENT W. SCOTT



LONDON:

GEORGE ROUTLEDGE AND SONS

BROADWAY, LUDGATE HILL.

NEW YORK. 416, BROOME STREET

1880

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THE STAGE DOOR.

THE STAGE DOOR KEEPER.

BY CLEMENT W. SCOTT.



A MEAN and narrow opening in an unromantic wall—an entrance less pretentious than any that can be found at the side of a factory gate—an approach difficult to find, hidden up a blind alley, swarming with miscellaneous children, and lumbered up with ragged and disconsolate-looking scenery crumbling to ruin—a dark prison-looking gate, at whose ominous sight have fallen down the wreck of torn forests and the glory of departed palaces; the guardian an overworked and faithful servant, and the sentinel a carpenter, resting from his labours and smoking a clay pipe—this is the approach to a paradise that feeds the unhealthy imagination with unworthy fancies, and has given the text for many a lying sermon—this is the Stage Door.

It is always well that people should be slightly acquainted with the subject they dis-

cuss; and I sometimes wish that those who are so eloquent in denouncing scenes with which they are evidently unfamiliar, lives of which they know nothing, and professions which might be far more honourable and honoured were they not so persistently maligned, boasted half the philosophy, perspicuity, shrewd judgment, and common sense of my old friend Tom Porter. He was a stage-door keeper, and a man of vast experience, great memory, and considerable attainments. His father had been an actor who, under another name, was famous in the dramatic annals of his time, and his son promised to follow very close upon his father's footsteps, when his bright career was cut short by a blundering half-drunken carpenter, who left a trap open one night, and crippled the poor fellow for life. Misfortune, so I have been told, fell heavily upon Tom Porter's family soon after this deplorable accident, that nearly broke the heart of an honourable and ambitious man. He had seen all the great actors from the time he could toddle to Drury Lane or Covent Garden; he had lived in an atmosphere of art; the talk was of nothing else but acting at home, over the baked joint on Sunday down to bed-time on Saturday night, from morning till night, it was nothing but theatres and theatre-going, old texts and new readings; and young Tom had dreamed of playing

Hamlet, Macbeth, Werner, and Richelieu with the best of them, when the hospital doctor pressed his hand, and told him at the very outset of his young life that he would never act again, and poor Tom turned his face to the wall, and sobbed like a child, "God's will be done!" Yes, my dear sir, don't smile. Actors can pray, like the rest of us, and they have hearts of their own, I can assure you.

But how to remain at the theatre? It would have been death to Tom Porter to desert that familiar ship. The very smell of the place fascinated him; he would have taken checks at the top of the gallery staircase sooner than leave the dear old walls; but it was not so bad as he thought, for he was appointed confidential secretary to successive managers at the best established theatres in London; and it was only when age and infirmities crept upon him that old Tom went through the stages of prompter and copyist, till finally he was installed close by the stage door in that bright and cosy little recess, hung round with pictures, warmed by a bright fire, and made companionable by a comfortable cat. It was here that I made the good fellow's acquaintance, and derived such constant pleasure from his interesting and varied conversation.

"Yes, sir," he used to say to me, "there are good theatres and bad theatres, just as there are good parsons and bad parsons, or good judges and bad judges. We're none of us perfect in this world, except, no doubt, the good gentlemen who know such a precious lot more about our business than we do ourselves. Look round here, sir, now do, and see for yourself, where are the broughams, and bouquets, and diamonds, and the swells waiting outside, that the papers make so much fuss about! It all seems pretty neat, and

tidy, and decent now, don't it? You can sit there in the corner by the fire, and see them pass. All right, sir, sit you down; don't mind the black cat, old Othello always takes the most comfortable seat in the room."

And so I sat down and observed. A constant swaying backwards and forwards of an adjacent door; dressers and messengers passing in and out with a "Good evening, Mr. Porter," or a "Good night, Tom;" modest women and quiet men passing in and out in an orderly, business-like way; an occasional author, who disconsolately called for his manuscript, or exultingly deposited a great roll of brown paper that would have broken down the rack, and was accordingly put aside for the manager—why, there was really nothing in the outside appearance of the place to distinguish it from a factory, when the wheels of the machinery of pleasure spin round between seven o'clock and midnight. Where on earth is the fascination of the stage door, and the glittering revelry of life behind the scenes? I could not find anything of the kind, and old Tom was delighted at my antipathy to the dull and unromantic side of a world spangled with so much idealism and fancy. No sensible spectator likes to have his illusions destroyed. He does not care to see the ropes and spars, and guys and pulleys; to be convinced that it is not a forest, but canvas; not a grass bank, but matting; not a sparkling river, but glass and gelatine; that the heroes and heroines discuss the ordinary affairs of life in the green-room; that the adorable actress is compelled to paint her face and her eyebrows, and never fails to smother you with powder when she shakes her head; that the pale student Hamlet looks as brown as a Zulu Kaffir, and the love-sick Romeo is daubed over like a Red Indian. No one has a right

behind the scenes; not that there is the slightest temptation in such a prosy workshop, but because it is cruel to tear down the veil and expose the machinery of so excellent an art. It is the dreariest and dirtiest of spots.

So Tom Porter laughed when I obstinately refused to stir a step further than his comfortable sanctum, to which I obtained admission through some trifling service I had rendered to one of his family who was very dear to him indeed.

Returning from the seaside one summer, I happened to be in a bad railway accident, and was mercifully preserved. I was able to pay some attention to the distresses of my unfortunate fellow-passengers, who stood disconsolate and dazed, in a hideous wreck and heartrending confusion I can scarcely forget, or recall without a shudder.

The sun-burned children crying for their dead mothers; the ruin of life and property piled up amidst pipes, and pleasure baskets, and broken toys; the cruel engine lying twisted and torn, in a cloud of blinding mist; the doctors hurrying to their mangled patients, presented a most distressing scene. Alone, and apparently uncared for, I found swooning on the embankment a young girl. At first I thought she was dead, so fair, calm, and undisturbed she looked, but a little brandy revived her, and I found that she was more frightened than hurt.

Her nerves were far more injured than her body, and I soon saw that it was absolutely necessary to remove her immediately from the scene. She cried piteously for her father, and implored to be taken home; and between the paroxysms of her fear, it was easy to see that her mind was intensely troubled with the thought that the news of the accident would arrive in London before the poor

girl could get home. "Oh, sir, I am travelling alone," she said; "if father hears of it, it will break his heart. What shall I do? what shall I do?"

I reflected for an instant, and decided. A couple of miles away from the scene of the accident was the station of a branch line to London. A few shillings to a lad procured me a fly, by merciful chance we caught a train at the side station, and we were back in London just as they were howling the news of the frightful accident all over the streets. On the journey home I had ascertained that the father of my little *protégée* was a stage-door keeper at a theatre in the immediate neighbourhood of the Strand—where news bad and good spreads like wildfire. So I told the cabman to drive as fast as he could to the stage door of the theatre. It was best to take the bull by the horns, and to prevent mischief as soon as possible.

I found a crowd of good-natured folk round the door that led to the theatre, and inside the stage-door keeper's box I could hear distinctly that strange, low, moaning wail as of a strong man in pain. It is terrible to hear a man sob; and all these much-abused women at the vicious theatre were actually drying their eyes, and trying to comfort a broken-hearted father who thought he would never see his daughter again.

"Make way there," I said, as I tried to make an opening through the crowd.

The usual response came; on one side the surly ill-conditioned "Why should I make way for you?" on the other, "Why not let the gentleman pass?" They did let the gentleman pass when they saw he had a young and frightened girl on his arm. There was a silence, and then we heard—

"Father! father!"

"Oh! Madge, my little one; thank God!"

That was all. We heard no more after that. They were united in an embrace that belongs to things heavenly, and that gives one a lump in the throat to think of it. And, strange to say, from that instant I was made welcome whenever I cared to look in upon Tom Porter the old stage-door keeper. The best chair in the little den was always at my disposal, the warmest corner was mine by the fire out of all the draughts; I was allowed to smoke a pipe if I leaned very much up the chimney; and it was as much as my comfort was worth if I refused an occasional pull at the comforting "dog's nose" that simmered on the hob.

The honest fellow could never get it out of his head that I had saved his daughter's life, and that I was a kind of hero to be rewarded with all the hospitable honours of his paternal mansion. I had done nothing of the kind, but he insisted I was wrong, and there was no good in arguing the point. That reconciliation made a deep impression on the old man. She was alive who was dead. His heart made one bound from sorrow to unspeakable joy, and the happy accident of courtesy earned for me the never-ending gratitude of as honest a soul as ever lived.

Fancy this, Mr. Preacher, you who are never weary of raising your eloquent voice against the antechamber of Hades, although I am sorry to say you use a very much stronger expression; fancy this, Mr. Tub Spouter in the parks, who tell me when I am walking out amidst the fields and the flowers that if I dare to enter a theatre I had better renounce all hope of salvation; fancy this, my fine ladies who talk about "actors and actresses and such kind of people;" fancy this, Mr. Superciliousness, who argue in some strange kind of way that those who possess

unsavable souls are somehow connected with a most elevating and regenerating art, kept down from salvation by cruel prejudice and vilercant. Why, here was this venerable keeper of the door that leads to the stage, who had actually brought up his large family in an honest and God-fearing manner, and regarded his pure and tender little daughter as one of the best of the blessings that had cheered his simple life.

The three cosiest scenes that, at present appeal to my imagination are, the inside of a travelling caravan; the bar parlour of a country inn, with a happy circle enjoying the first autumn fire; and that small and neatly-arranged little den where the stage-door keeper is supposed to sulk away his life, and to be the intermediary between Cupid and the postman. I always envied our old friend Mrs. Jarley, and can conceive no existence more delightful than to be dragged in a house upon wheels about the leafy lanes of Old England; to sit outside in the morning, and eat your breakfast off a drum, and to get to bed in a comfortable alcove when the mists begin to rise and the land is chill. And then there is the bar parlour, as seen by the lonely traveller, who peeps through the crimson curtains, and sees the firelight glancing upon the polished mahogany, blue china in a corner cupboard, and old Dutch clock that ticks in a paternal fashion over the contented scene. Well is it for those who cannot enjoy realities to taste occasionally the pleasures of imagination.

The caravan is the home of giants, dwarfs, hardware sellers, and ubiquitous cheap jacks; the country inn is the rest of the landscape painter; but the Cockney follower of art must warm his toes by the stage door fire.

Fortified by this strange friendship of which I have spoken, and flattered by the

warm attachment that old Tom expressed for me, I found myself very often, particularly in winter, a guest at his hospitable fire. My passion for the art of which he was so humble a representative grew under his guidance. He lent me strange old theatrical books that he had picked up at odd bookstalls, showed me rare prints he had collected, and delighted me with curious reminiscences of his valuable experience.

Old Tom Porter must have been a notable exception to his race, for I am given to understand that the Cerberus of the stage door is sometimes a strange dog, who snarls and shows his teeth when any one approaches his kennel. "*Cave canem*" should be written up over his lodge, for his primary idea is to look upon every one as an intruder, and he takes a delight in keeping an author—who is his special abomination—in a thorough draught and in an ignominious position, in order to show how thoroughly he is the master, and the author is the slave. A fixed idea possesses him that the male portion of the Metropolis is in a combination to bear off the leading actress, storm the manager's castle, and hold high revel amidst the dirty ropes and grappling-irons that disfigure the hold of the theatrical ship. His first instinct is to act on the defensive, to assert his authority in a brusque and bearish manner, and to look upon the world outside his tub as a set of refractory carpenters and supernumeraries. I may be mistaken, but this is the prevailing notion of the keeper of the stage door.

Tom Porter belonged to quite a different school. He obtained influence and authority without a harsh tone or a coarse word. He loved women because they were gentle and sweet as his own nature. About him there was a certain air of distinction and good breeding, and he handed the letters

from the rack with the air of a courtier. And so it was that every one in the theatre made a friend and a confidant of the old man, they told him their troubles, and related their experiences, and with the aid of a prodigious memory, and a habit of jotting down what he heard, he managed to collect a fund of varied anecdotes and reminiscences. The most celebrated actors and actresses of the day had often dropped in for a chat with Tom Porter, to talk over old times, and compare notes, and so as his life had been devoted to the stage, and his tastes bound up in it, he became the storehouse to which many people referred when they were puzzled for a verification, circumstance, or a date. He was an encyclopædia in himself, and had a strange method of memory to bring scenes of the past before him.

The smiling retreat in which Tom Porter spent the best part of his days, now that his home was reduced to a simple lodging, his good wife was in her grave, and all his children scattered about the world, was hung about with pictures, all bearing upon the stage in some way or another.

One of these pictures always absorbed my attention. It haunted me, and somehow or other invariably fascinated my eyes towards it. Placed too high on the walls to enable a close inspection, it seemed to my short sight like a fair-haired woman, clothed in white, and on her death-bed. "Dear dead women, with such hair too! What's become of all the gold?" This familiar line haunted me whenever I looked at the picture. It was one of those strange, hungry faces that out-strip mere beauty with rare expression. The eyes closed now were a little sunken, and half overshadowed by the bar that marks both intellect and music. A large and full mouth gave the best character to the face,

and the hair, a luxurious river of gold, might have adorned the head of one of Raphael's Madonnas. Many would have scorned the idea of beauty in such a face, but it contained the reflection of strong character and soul, it represented an ideal nature, and in it was that tired and hunted look that mean nervous power and the exhaustion of keen susceptibility. What then was this strange picture of a fair, dead woman? Was it a Juliet in her tomb? a Desdemona on her death-bed? an Ophelia in her love swoon?

One night I was sitting alone with old Tom. It was bitter cold and dreary outside, and I suppose the play they were acting inside was unusually solemn, for not a sound could be heard through the swing-doors, and no carpenter, with some abnormal thirst upon him, disturbed our conversation and slouched out for his unnecessary beer. Neither of us spoke, and instinctively I found that I was looking at the picture.

"What is it, Tom? I didn't like to ask you, but what is it?"

"Eh! What?" said the old fellow, who was dozing off before the fire.

"The picture. What does it mean?"

"Where?"

"Up there!"

He took it down, and then I examined it for the first time. It was not Ophelia, or Juliet, or Desdemona. No Shakesperian heroine or romantic scene was here depicted. I rubbed away the dirt from the glass, and saw the figure of a fair English woman stretched upon a copper couch. She was wrapped in a white peignoir, and over her still white features trickled a silent stream of water that seemed to tighten the garments on her and to emphasize her shroud. It was the photograph of a dead woman in the Parisian Morgue.

"This is what jealousy brings them to," said old Tom.

"What do you mean? Who was she?"

"One of the kindest, dearest women I ever knew. God bless her! But because she had not admirers enough over here in England, she must needs leave the stage when she had made a considerable name, marry a foreigner, and settle in France. How the men loved her! Not because she was so very beautiful, you know, for her features were sharp, and her cheek-bones were strongly marked; but there was that in her face which scores of her rivals never had—an unsatisfied hunger, an undetermined longing, a pathetic weariness, a kind of something in her expression which seemed to say, 'Only love me and understand me, only be patient with me and let us learn one another, and there will come a sympathy and a union which mere fools do not understand.'

"Such women are not made for fools. The popular beauty, with a faultless face and a stereotyped expression, with a gaze on one side and a gaze on the other, always the same, the same vacant look, the same silly simper, the same attitude of self-satisfaction, as much as to say, 'I am a doll; I am very lovely, but don't rumple my nice silver paper or disarrange my curls,'—these are the women for the majority. But then they don't understand anything about it, and don't deserve anything better than a soulless face and a settled smile. The Frenchman did who married this poor creature, and he so well appreciated the prize that his jealousy became a madness. Women like men to be a little jealous, for it is in a certain sense a compliment. When it is exaggerated, it becomes a bore.

"To tell you the truth, I don't believe she ever liked the man. He overwhelmed her

with kindness, and that touched her heart. She pitied him and respected him; but never loved him. If she could have eaten gold he would have given it to her. Every wish was anticipated; every whim considered. Her life with him was one round of luxury and contented ease; but that is not love. A woman with a face like that, with such a restless, soaring, unsatisfied spirit, wanted a man with brain, and force, and power to love her. She was clever, and she desired intellect in her lover. She wanted to be led on to the higher tastes, culture, and light for which she inwardly craved. But she got suppers, dinners, smart dresses, and diamond rings, things that no woman despises, but then how very few women do they satisfy. However, she married him, and she was soon cloyed with the sweets of her married life. She cursed herself for her ingratitude; she wanted to love the man so much, and yet she couldn't.

"But she was loyal. A woman with a nature like hers, had only to hold up her finger, and she might have had lovers by the score; but she was loyal on my oath.

"Wearied with all this persistent devotion, and unsatisfied with her dissatisfaction, she lent herself to a deception innocently conceived, but one calculated to destroy the peace of her husband for ever. She meant no harm, but look at her there on her miserable death-bed. Her punishment came surely and swiftly enough.

"She had a brother, of whose existence her husband was unaware. He was a scamp, a bad lot, and had been transported years before for dishonesty in the bank in which he was employed. Her husband had been so good to her that she did not care to distress him with her family troubles, and so she,

perhaps foolishly, covered over that bad spot, and held her tongue.

"But she did not remember that the time would come when her brother's sentence would expire, and there must be an explanation. It did expire, and the brother came back to the world, penniless and an outcast.

"He found his sister out, he traced her to Paris, and, woe-begone wretch as he was, presented himself at her luxurious apartments, luckily when her husband was away.

"She was in a dilemma. She had not the heart to turn her brother away, and had not the strength to tell her husband. The most unfortunate course she could take, she took. Whenever her husband was out she received her brother, and delighted in surrounding his appearance with a mystery. Secret notes were conveyed to him. She admitted him to her apartments at unreasonable hours. No servant was taken into her confidence, and still in her heart desiring to spare her husband, she innocently compromised her reputation.

"It is impossible to keep these scandals secret, let women manœuvre as they will. Tongues will wag; and who amongst us is without enemies?

"Some kind Iago, good, generous, upright, and self-denying creature, poured the necessary poison into the husband's ear. He received anonymous letters, and was told to be on his guard. 'English women are not to be trusted,' wrote the correspondent, in a female hand. You must remember the husband had a large fortune, and did not marry one of his own countrywomen. The explanation is obvious.

"Once his jealousy was aroused, the cruelty of his nature came out; and once the innocent woman knew that she was suspected, her better feelings were outraged. She was so true, that she hated the man who could

believe her false; and in one of those wild freaks to which women are partial, she heaped up coals of fire, and bade her innocent brother come and act his part under more suspicious circumstances than ever. Poor thing! she had friends as well as enemies; and one night, when she had arranged a settlement for her brother, and had ordered him back to England, with his pockets lined, and an excellent start in life again, she received a note, scribbled in pencil:

"'For God's sake, be cautious; your husband is watching.'

"She laughed a scornful laugh of triumph, and scattered the fragments of the note upon the floor, and then, as they were parting possibly for many years, she led her brother to the door of her apartment.

"She saw a dark shadow in the doorway opposite, and knew it must be her husband.

Her heart was steeled and nerved for the encounter, and she hated the man for playing the spy upon her. A sudden inspiration came upon her.

"'Kiss me, Maurice,' she said.

"Her brother kissed her, and wondered at the embrace that tightened about his neck.

"'Good night, dear.'

"'Good night.'

"What followed was the work of an instant. There was a loud scream of hatred that rang through the house, and the young brother, taken unawares, was hurled headlong down the stairs. The wife fled back.

Without another word the husband rushed into the apartment like a madman. He did not wait for explanation, or ask it. His curses were so terrible, that the wife's blood chilled in her very veins. Her love died out under the fury of his accusations, and she laughed, pale and unmoved, at his bloodless face and quivering fingers.

"It was the last sound heard in the tall Parisian house that night; for, when the servants returned, they found their mistress stabbed to the heart with the dagger she had once worn as Juliet. Next day her husband's body was fished up from the Seine! The day after, the suicide and the murdered woman were side by side in the Morgue."

Old Tom looked at me, and there were tears in his eyes. He kissed the picture reverently, and put it back in its corner again. I looked astonished; and then he spoke:

"It was the only time I was ever in Paris, and it will be the last. I went to claim what belonged to me. She was my sister.

"Bless you, sir," said old Tom, "Othello was not the only one! I could tell you scores of tragedies in our profession that arose out of jealousy. It is as useful a passion for dramatic purposes as love, and that no author can do without, let him try ever so hard."

* * * * *

It was Christmas-time, and all was going on merrily at the theatres. Managers were nervously active, scene-painters worn out with fatigue and anxiety, stages crowded with neat girls and irrepressible children; stage directors, loud of tongue but kind of heart, vowing vengeance one minute, and patting a child on the head the next—flouncing about with hands in pockets, and declaring, "It shall be done if I have to stay here all night, so there!" and immediately afterwards dismissing some section of giggling girls with a smile and a "There! that will do, my dears! Go to bed!"

For was it not within a week of Boxing Night, that great feast-day in the Calendar of the Stage, when untold blessings are told out to thousands of honest and hard-working households by what I shall ever call the

charity of Christmas playgoing? At other times of the year there are signs of weariness and fatigue at the close of a series of rehearsals. Repetition induces a kind of contempt for the subject. But not at Christmas on the eve of the pantomime. Dear me, what a noise and a chattering! The children look upon the stage as a huge playground, have games at hide-and-seek behind the wings, lose themselves in mysterious cellars, and get into endless scrapes. The girls gather into knots and discuss their dress, longing for the time when they will exchange their poor, worn, little gowns for the gorgeous vestments of the princes and princesses of imaginative extravaganza; and everyone seems exhilarated with the thought that "treasury" will come very soon, and that unless something very unforeseen and unexpected occurs, there will be a comfortable and convenient income for six or seven weeks at least. It is the fashion nowadays to sneer at our good old-fashioned Christmas amusement, and there is an inclination to take sides against it, and to veneer it over with the cheap superciliousness that is the stock-in-trade of the Brummagem critic and the "second-hand gentleman"; but many of us would be sorry to deprive the children of their innocent sport, or to abolish, without ample reflection, one branch of the merry and healthy trade of pleasure.

For the first time for six-and-twenty years Tom Porter was not at his post at the theatre. The old faces came to the door again, but they were not greeted by his cheery countenance. Where was old Tom? This was the question from the clown to the columbine. They all liked the good fellow, and as they are the most conservative of people, these artists, it did not seem like old times to come to work at Christmas, and see a new guardian at the stage door.

But disappointment yielded to sympathetic regret when it was whispered about that Tom Porter was very ill. He had worked on through a neglected cold, and he was very bad—so somebody said who had heard it from somebody else. Of late years there had been a mystery about the old man. No one knew exactly where he lived, and he showed an obstinate disinclination to tell them.

He was to all intents and purposes the last of his race. The wife had died long ago. The sons had emigrated, and his favourite daughter, married now, had gone to join her brother in Australia, and so, when Tom Porter took ill, as they say, he found for the first time in his life that he was alone in the world. This is a terrible moment in the life of a solitary man. His occupation at the theatre gave him friends, amusement, and distraction. He only came home to sleep, and got to work again, and hardly perceived the misery of isolation; but when he had to lower his flag, and was compelled to keep to his bed, it was positive pain for a man of his disposition to look round the empty room and find solitude.

Gaiety, excitement, business, conversation, stories, and anecdotes had been the food of his daily life, and now, suddenly and unexpectedly, he knew that he was very ill, and was too proud to tax the claims of friendship.

There were hundreds of good men and women—for they are generous, self-sacrificing, self-denying, and most human in this great profession—who would have come and nursed the old man, but he preferred to go back to his hole and die without bothering a soul.

But he sent for me all the same. He denied himself to all his old friends, he refused to let them know in what corner of this London world he was passing away, but

one night I received a note scribbled in pencil, that said, "Come and see the old man, like a good friend. He is very bad and lonely."

I followed the direction, and made for a top floor in a little cul-de-sac out of Great Ormond Street. I knocked at the door, and a faint voice answered me. There he lay, the good old fellow, and I could see that the pain of death was on his face.

All was perfectly neat and in order; nothing had been neglected, but here he was in this silent upper room with nothing to console him but the dull roar of distant London.

"I am going fast, old friend," he said. "I know it, I feel it. Let the doctors do what they will, I know I am going home. But, oh, do take me away from here. They are very kind, and charitable, and attentive, but they are strangers, and this silence is horrible. I want some excitement and noise. I'd sooner be in a hospital where I could hear some one talk, or in a workhouse to listen to a grumble; but oh, these days and nights without a word, I cannot endure it."

I promised I would have him removed where he would be happier; but I knew the end was very near. His breath came rapidly, and he looked at me with that searching, piercing gaze that means the end.

All on a sudden he lifted himself up with some strange nervous power, and pulled a book from under the pillow.

"Look here," he said, "this was the work of my life."

"I loved the old theatre, and it was my amusement to jot down all I heard when I got home. Here they all are, scraps, anecdotes, stories, all sorts of odds and ends. If I lived two hundred years I never could get to the end of all I have heard at one place or another. I never showed it to any one but you, but I thought you might get something out of it that would make them laugh—yes, and perhaps make them cry. You love the stage, and I like you for it—besides, bless you, you saved my girl."

I protested.

"Don't say another word—you saved my girl; and where is she now? Why doesn't she come to her old father, who is alone—so terribly alone."

He was getting weaker now as he handed me the book of manuscript and newspaper cuttings, but he touched it tenderly till the last. It seemed as if he were parting from a dear friend.

The breathing came harder than before, and I took his hand. A nervous thrill of satisfaction went through his body as our hands touched, for though I was a stranger, still he looked on me as a friend.

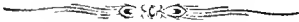
"I shall not die alone now," he said. "God bless you for coming to the old man."

He seemed asleep, but as I bent over him he was murmuring, "Take care of the book, it is yours—remember, yours."

"What shall I call it, Tom?" I whispered.

His face lighted up for the last time, as he murmured very faintly, "The Stage Door."

The rest was silence.



THE BROKEN NECKLACE: A LOVE STORY.

By MARIE BANCROFT.



YEARS ago, in a small country theatre, where my father was engaged, I was considered by the manager a very clever child, and in children's parts had become a pet with the audience.

Attractions must have been at a very low ebb when the manager conceived the idea of my playing "Juliet." I am thankful that such things do not occur now. Happy children! and happier public!

I was a pale, thin, delicate-looking child, and very tall for my age, being only thirteen, although announced in the bills as twelve. Every one thought at that time that I should, if I lived, be a remarkably fine woman, but since playing "Juliet" on that memorable first occasion I have not grown an inch, and sometimes think that my tragic efforts gave as great a shock to my system as to my audience.

Often on my way to and from our rehearsals, when I had time to loiter, I stopped at a window in the little High Street, and longingly looked at a necklace of pearl beads, in three rows, marked five shillings—a fortune to me then. I saved until I had half-a-

crown, and then tried to induce the shopman to let me have it for that price; but I failed. My father promised to buy me the treasure if I would be very good, and study "Juliet." How readily I said "Yes," for the labour of learning the words and being taught by my mother how to speak them, seemed light indeed compared with the joy of possessing those little pearl beads.

The night arrived for the "great dramatic event" (*vide* advertisements). My mother could scarcely dress me, her hands trembled so. I could not help wondering why she should be so anxious. I was not. I was of that happy age that knows no responsibility. I had on a pretty white dress, trimmed with narrow silver lace, my hair hanging in large waves over my shoulders, and best adornment of all was my beautiful pearl necklace. Oh! how every one would envy me those beads.

All went well until the fourth act, when, in throwing my head back to drink the poison, my long train, which I wore for the first time in my life, and which had been a great anxiety to me all through the play, got entangled in my feet, and in the effort to save myself from falling, my necklace gave way, and the beads were scattered about in all directions. I looked scared for a moment; but when I fully realized that it was broken, I fell to crying so bitterly that I thought my heart would break too. I sank on to the couch sobbing piteously. The audience thought this a good piece of acting, and gave me great applause.

Nothing in the shape of fond persuasions,

promises, threats, or arguments would induce me to go on for the last act—nothing but the restored necklace, one row of which was broken, and the beads scattered all over the stage. At length, my poor mother, who was almost wild with despair, promised me a new one if I would only finish the part.

So, in the greatest grief, and with stifled sobs, I went through the last act. When I fell on Romeo's body there was great applause, but in the middle of Friar Laurence's last speech I saw some of my beads lying close to his feet. His treading upon them seemed imminent, so I got up and rescued them, and then lay down again. Of course, the rest of Friar Laurence's speech was not heard, and the curtain fell amidst loud laughter. I had a good scolding from father, mother, and manager, who hoped that when I again played Juliet I should think more of the part than of the ornaments.

As we were leaving the theatre, my eyes swollen from crying over the injured necklace, a gentleman who had witnessed the performance and the scene stepped up to us, and said, "I hope you will pardon me for speaking to you ; my name is Captain —. Let me tell you how much I have been impressed by your little daughter's acting as Juliet ; it really was, for so young an actress, very remarkable. Take care of her, sir, there is a bright career before her. Good night. Good night, little one !" He shook my hand, and asked me if I would give him the remnant of my broken necklace, which I had so carefully rescued from destruction when supposed to be dead. I trembled at the thought of parting with it ; but my mother whispered to me, "I am going to buy you another." So I gave it. On our way home we talked of nothing else—my father dwelling

on the criticism, and I on the final disappearance of my necklace.

For many and many a night I quite looked for my "prophet," but he had gone as mysteriously as he had come. Often on our way home I have said, "We have never seen that kind gentleman since, father, and, though I only saw him once, I seem to miss him somehow ; will his words ever come true, I wonder ?"

About two years after that, we joined the company of the Bristol Theatre, where I played almost every class of part that ever was written ; one night I appeared as Ophelia, owing to the illness of the leading lady. I felt that I had made a success, and was leaving the theatre with my mother, who instructed me in every part I played, talking to her, and feeling very happy, when who should step up to us, but my "prophet." We both recognized him at once. I was delighted, my mother gratified, and so far as circumstances would permit, she showed that his criticism and kind compliments were most acceptable two years ago, but, having some considerable knowledge of the world, she feared that his admiration of me as a child, *might* grow into something more serious, and she therefore did not receive him with that warmth she otherwise might have done. He said, "Well, little one, you see I was right, you are going up the ladder, step by step ; mark my words, the next one will be London."

My heart jumped at the sight of this man ; there was a kind of mystery about him, he seemed to be mixed up with my life somehow, and whatever part of importance I played, I always thought of him and of his kind words. He showed me the string of pearls, and said, "You see how I have treasured these. I don't intend to part with

them. I shall never give them back to you unless you ask me for them." How different were my feelings for those pearls now; it seemed like taking away my heart when he first asked me for them, and how, unknown to myself, he had taken away my heart.

Every night during his short stay he sat in a corner of the dress circle, and at the end of the play would show me the pearl beads; he would wait sometimes outside the stage door, just to press my hand and say, "Good-night, little one;" he had not time to say more, for my mother used to sit at the window of our lodgings, which were opposite, to see me come home.

I was now in love for the very first time in my life. How everything else in the whole world suddenly dwindled into nothing. Father, mother, sisters, theatres, acting—all seemed to be shut out by a curtain, and only one being was in view. There was nothing in this man to attract a girl of my age: he was not young, not what is called good-looking, and was poor; but what was all this to me? I argued with myself that all the nicest people were poor, and I didn't care; but I had never had an opportunity of telling him all this, for my mother had declined to encourage his visits, and so he kept away, and never tried to see me, except for one moment to say "Good night."

One night I received a note from him, only a few lines, saying, "Good-bye, little one. I wonder if we shall ever meet again. I shall never part with your pearls. I love you, little one. I wish you loved me, but it is better for you that you should not." This was the first opportunity he had ever given me of telling him how much I loved him, and I was resolved to take it.

I gave the note to my mother, and implored her to let me see him. She refused,

saying I was a silly girl. I fancy she said a fool, but I was too agitated to remember.

"How can you think seriously of such a mysterious person?" Mysterious! she would not give him a chance of being anything else. "Surely," she continued, "you cannot wish to destroy all your professional prospects. Let me hear no more of this nonsense. Thank goodness he is gone, and you will forget him in a few days."

"Forget him! and in a few days! Oh, mother!" I knew his address in Ireland, and after vainly trying to follow my mother's counsel, I wrote to him saying that I loved him more than anything else in the world, and that if he really cared for me as much, I would run away, and go to him; that if I did not marry him I would marry no one else; that I could not study, that I could do nothing but think of him. He replied that it seemed hard to take me from a profession in which I was destined to shine—that he should for ever reproach himself if I regretted, when too late, the step I had taken—that his love and empty pockets would be but a miserable return for the sacrifice I should make. He begged me to reflect. I did, and the more I reflected the more determined I became, and I told him so. He answered that he would not fight with his feelings any longer; that he was sure, when once we were married, my mother would soon forgive us.

And so it came about that I was to start on a certain day. All was settled. I was to receive the final letter with instructions, and the money for my journey. I thought the day would never come. Time seemed to creep and not to fly. But as the day drew nearer and nearer, my heart, which had been so light and joyful, began to beat with a heavier thud. There was a kind of fear—

a wish to run away from myself, for I felt afraid of myself—my head and my heart began to argue.

On the night before I was to leave my home, I returned from my work at the theatre. I found my mother waiting supper for me as usual. I could not eat, I was nervous and thoughtful. My mother asked me if I was ill, or had I been annoyed at the theatre? I shook my head. I could not trust myself to speak. When she kissed me and said, "Good-night, God bless you!" I whispered to myself, "Will He bless me tomorrow?" The words fell from her lips like a reproach, for although she said them to me every night, they never seemed to mean so much before—they never set me thinking as they did that night.

When I was alone in my little bed-room, I fell on my knees and prayed to God to help me and to guide me, for my heart was full of doubt. I felt how I was deceiving my dear mother, to whom I owed everything—who had taught me, who had worked for me, and who was now dependent upon me. If I went away, what would become of her and my young sisters, for my father's health was getting worse and worse. Oh! how I wept and prayed that night! I implored God to help me in my trouble and to give me some warning in my dreams. I cried myself to sleep but awoke several times. I heard the church-bell toll four, six, and eight. Still no warning dream. I tried to think that perhaps my going would be for the best, or I should have surely dreamt something, and I felt a little happier as I lay thinking. Half-past eight was the post time, and I had told the servant to bring any letters there might be for me to my room.

The half-hour struck. I heard the postman's knock. My heart seemed to stop

beating. I heard the girl on the stairs. I could scarcely breathe. A knock at the door. This was the final letter. I jumped out of bed, and as I crossed the room to open the door, a voice, as if in great haste, said quickly, "Don't go."

God alone knows what my feelings were at that moment. Never—never, to my dying day, shall I forget it. A thrill, first of awe and terror, then of thankfulness, came over me. I fell on my knees, and said, "I won't go." The servant impatiently pushed the letter under the door. I opened it. There were the final instructions—how he would meet me on the journey, and the money for my expenses. I threw on my dressing-gown, sat down, and wrote these words—"Don't expect me, I cannot go. I have changed my mind." I enclosed the money, and sent the letter to the post. I gave a sigh of relief, lay down on the bed, and cried bitterly.

One morning, during breakfast, a few weeks later, my mother (who up to this time knew nothing of my little story) handed me the newspaper, and with a smile of satisfaction pointed to the marriage column. He had married! I threw my arms around my mother's neck, had a good cry, and told her everything.

The words of my "prophet" were fulfilled, and some two or three years later I was acting in a London theatre. Whenever I made a success, I thought of his kind words when I first saw him, and I remembered how I had grown to love him at last.

One day I was walking slowly up Regent Street, when I stopped, without knowing why, at the Carrara marble works. Serious thoughts came over me as I contemplated the headstones and monuments, and as I turned from them with a sigh, a voice by my side said, in a low tone, "Well, my faithless

little one." I turned, and saw my "prophet." My first instinct was to run away, but my legs would not move.

"You see," he said, "what came of your suddenly changing your mind, I revenged myself and got married. How cruel you were!" He told me that he had married a rich widow, that he proposed, was accepted, and was married within a month from my refusal. After thinking to myself that widows lost no time in settling their affairs, I told him the story of my warning, and he seemed much impressed by it. He answered, "It was, I am sure, a timely warning, for we should have been very poor, and consequently very miserable. It would have been a dreary life for you, and much too big a sacrifice, with all your bright prospects. I am now a widower, with one little child. My wife died a year after our marriage. I am rich now, and can return to my old young love. I wonder if my little Juliet loves me still as much as she said she did?" Yes, I did, but I would not say so. I was afraid to hope again, so I said, "You had better not see me any more; you will soon forget me." He replied, "Never, until I am under one of those," pointing to the headstones in the window. A cold chill ran through me as he said those words.

He was under orders to sail for India the following week, so no time was to be lost. He called on my mother, and asked her consent to our corresponding and to our marrying on his return to England, which would be in a year, providing she consented. My mother hesitated, but after tears and entreaties from me, and with the hope that he would marry a black woman, or that I should forget him, or that something would happen to keep him in India, she reluctantly consented. The fates seemed to will it this time, and so I was very happy again.

The day came to say good-bye. He showed me the pearl necklace, saying, "You see how I have guarded it. I will never part with it; it seems to have linked our two lives together." I looked at the broken beads, and all the old times came back to me. There was my necklace just as I had left it, with two rows complete, and the third partly gone; and there was the knot which I had made to prevent the other beads from falling off.

I somehow wished there had been no broken link. I had begun to feel rather superstitious now about our courtship.

I was to have a letter from him by every mail. Every mail brought me one, full of love and kind words. No one ever seemed to speak such words as he did, they were so good and honest. I always felt that I could trust him, and that is why I loved him.

Six months passed—seven, eight, and nine—and every mail brought me my letter. How anxiously I looked for his handwriting—I counted the days and hours. At last, the day came, but no letter; the next mail arrived, and the next, but still no letter. What could it mean? My mother, smiling, said, "Ah, my child, the old, old story; and I am not sorry." After a few days' reflection, I began to think that she was right, and that I had been a fool; but I was very unhappy. He had seemed to be my guiding star ever since I was a little girl, and all my first and purest love was his. Oh, it was dreadful to bear!

One day, very shortly after his third letter was due, I was again in Regent Street, and thought of the day I had met him there. I was very sad and miserable, but still could not help clinging to the hope of seeing him again, and that all would be explained. He

had been so frank and honest, I could not help trusting to his honour. Perhaps he was coming home to surprise me. As I approached the Carrara marble works, I thought how strange it would be if I met him there again. I hurried to the place, with a kind of superstitious feeling—having met him there so strangely before, I should, perhaps, as strangely meet him there again. I stopped at the old spot, waited, looked about—no, not there! Ah! I remembered, I was looking in at the window when he came; I will do so again. I looked in at the window,

and there I saw a large white headstone, with these words:

Sacred to the Memory of
CAPTAIN —,

WHO DIED SUDDENLY, AT KURRACHEE,
&c., &c.

How I got home, I know not. I found my mother in tears, reading a letter which she had received from his dearest friend, who had found my letters among his papers. He had died soon after writing to me for the last time, and my little pearl necklace was buried with him.

MY FIRST "READING."

By HENRY IRVING.



MANY years ago (I think it was in the autumn of 1858), I made an ambitious appeal to the public which I don't suppose anybody remembers but myself. I had at that time been about

two years upon the stage, and was fulfilling my first engagement at Edinburgh. Like all young men, I was full of hope, and looked forward buoyantly to the time when I should leave the bottom rung of the ladder far below me. The weeks rolled on, however, and my name continued to occupy a

useful but obscure position in the playbill, and nothing occurred to suggest to the manager the propriety of doubling my salary, although he took care to assure me that I was "made to rise." It may be mentioned that I was then receiving thirty shillings per week, which was the usual remuneration for what is termed "juvenile lead."

At last a brilliant idea occurred to me. It happened to be vacation time—"preaching week," as it is called in Scotland—and it struck me that I might turn my leisure to account by giving a reading. I imparted this project to another member of the company, who entered into it with enthusiasm. He, too, was young and ambitious. It was the business aspect of the enterprise which fired his imagination, it was the artistic aim that excited mine. When I promised him half the profits, but not before, he had a vision of the excited crowd surging round the doors, of his characteristic energy in keeping them back with one hand and taking the

money with the other ; and afterwards, of the bags of coin neatly tied and carefully accounted for, according to some admirable system of book-keeping by double entry. This was enough for me, and I appointed him to the very responsible position of manager, and we went about feeling a deep compassion for people whose fortunes were not, like ours, on the point of being made.

Having arranged all the financial details, we came to the secondary but inevitable question—Where was the reading to be given? It would scarcely do in Edinburgh ; the public there had too many other matters to think about. Linlithgow was a likely place. Nothing very exciting had occurred in Linlithgow since the Regent Murray was shot by Hamilton of Bothwell Haugh. The old town was probably weary of that subject now, and would be grateful to us for cutting out the Regent Murray with a much superior sensation. My friend the manager accordingly paid several visits to Linlithgow, engaged the Town Hall, ordered the posters, and came back every time full of confidence. Meanwhile, I was absorbed in "The Lady of Lyons," which, being the play that most charmed the fancy of a young actor, I had decided to read ; and day after day, perched on Arthur's Seat, I worked myself into a romantic fever, with which I had little doubt I should inoculate the good people of Linlithgow.

The day came which was to make or mar us quite, and we arrived at Linlithgow in high spirits. I felt a thrill of pride at seeing my name for the first time in big capitals on the posters, which announced that at "eight o'clock precisely Mr. Henry Irving would read 'The Lady of Lyons.'" This was highly satisfactory, and gave us an excellent appetite for a frugal tea. At the hotel we eagerly questioned our waiter as to the probability of there being a great rush. He pon-

dered some time, as if calculating the number of people who had personally assured him of their determination to be present ; but we could get no other answer out of him than "Nane can tell." Did he think there would be fifty people there? "Nane can tell." Did he think that the throng would be so great that the Provost would have to be summoned to keep order? Even this audacious proposition did not induce him to commit himself, and we were left to infer that, in his opinion, it was not at all unlikely.

Eight o'clock drew near, and we sallied out to survey the scene of operations. The crowd had not yet begun to collect in front of the Town Hall, and the man who had undertaken to be there with the key was not visible. As it was getting late, and we were afraid of keeping the public waiting in the chill air, we went in search of the doorkeeper. He was quietly reposing in the bosom of his family, and to our remonstrance replied, "Ou, ay, the reading ! I forgot all about it." This was not inspiring, but we put it down to harmless ignorance. It was not to be expected that a man who looked after the Town Hall key would feel much interest in "The Lady of Lyons."

The door was opened, the gas was lighted, and my manager made the most elaborate preparations for taking the money. He had even provided himself with change, in case some opulent citizen of Linlithgow should come with nothing less than a sovereign. While he was thus energetically applying himself to business, I was strolling like a casual spectator on the other side of the street, taking some last feverish glances at the play, and anxiously watching for the first symptoms of "the rush."

The time wore on. The town clock struck eight, and still there was no sign of "the rush." The manager mournfully counted and

recounted the change for that sovereign. Half-past eight, and not a soul to be seen—not even a small boy! It was clear that nobody intended to come, and that the Regent Murray was to have the best of it after all. I could not read “The Lady of Lyons” to an audience consisting of the manager, with a face as long as two tragedies, so there was nothing for it but to beat a retreat. No one came out even to witness our discomfiture. Linlithgow could not have taken the trouble to study the posters, which now seemed such horrid mockeries in our eyes. I don’t think either of us could for some time afterwards read any announcement concerning “eight o’clock precisely” without emotion.

We managed to scrape together enough money to pay the expenses, which operation was a sore trial to my speculative manager, and a pretty severe tax upon the emoluments of the “juvenile lead.” As for Linlithgow, we voted it a dull place, still wrapped in mediæval slumber, and therefore insensible to the charms of the poetic drama, and to youthful aspirations after glory. We returned to Edinburgh the same night, and on the journey, by way of showing that I was not at all cast down, I favoured my manager with selections from the play, which he good-humouredly tolerated, though there was a sadness in his smile which touched my sensitive mind with compassion.

This incident was vividly revived last year, as I passed through Linlithgow on my way from Edinburgh to Glasgow, in which cities I gave, in conjunction with my friend Toole, two readings on behalf of the sufferers by the bank failure, which produced a large sum of money. My companion in the Linlithgow expedition was Mr. Edward Saker—now one of the most popular managers in the provinces.

RANDOM RECOLLECTIONS.

BY WALTER LACY.



As a most indolent medical student of some twenty summers, rising in the afternoon, and making my main meal at midnight, on Mondays and Wednesdays at Offley's, Tuesdays and

Fridays at the Cider Cellars, and Thursdays and Saturdays at the Coal Hole, I used to vary my work in the dissecting-room with some speech I had heard the previous night at the play, such as—"Ye crags and peaks, I am with you once again," after Macready, in "William Tell"; or, "Now is the winter of our discontent made glorious summer by the sun of York," after the grand Edmund Kean, to see whom I have run breathless up the stairs of the lower gallery of the T. R. Drury Lane, or into the pit, according to the contents of my purse.

About this period an incident occurred worth mentioning, regarding the *début*, in private, of a boy who had been taken to see Edmund Kean. He was destined to be a great actor this curly little child. I received, with other students of the "London Hospital," a ticket for a juvenile amateur performance of "Richard the Third," and of course busied myself behind the

scenes — probably painting the moustache of some of the small actors. The little Richard, with his black wig and scarlet dress, made a miniature resemblance of the great actor, and seemed to have imbibed that wonderful combination of physical impulse and inspiration that characterized the original, especially in the detonating and explosive power. The child's mamma was a little fairy-like creature, at whose house I had previously seen him with his own flaxen ringlets, half asleep, like a Blenheim dog, on the skirts of her velvet gown.

Many years after I had been playing at the Princess's, under Mr. Maddox's management, it was my wont, when out of work, to stroll from my house, near "The Angel," at Islington, down to the Grecian Saloon, being specially attracted by the clever comedian, Mr. Robson; and on one occasion I asked a little lady, sitting in front of me, to lend me her playbill; she turned round and showed, to my astonishment, the face of the mother of the boy who had made his infant bow as Richard III. "Good gracious!" exclaimed I. "Mrs. ——" "Ah!" said she, "what is my name?" "I really can't remember exactly," I replied; "but it is a short one—Biffin, or Tiffin, or something like that." As she would not enlighten me, I asked her what had become of her infant prodigy. "That is he," she replied, "now singing the 'Country Fair.' Robson is his stage name."

Years rolled on, and when I was playing Count Pepinelli, in "Marco Spada," during Charles Kean's management at the Princess's, Robson was playing the same part at the Olympic, and two notes crossed in the post.

"DEAR ROBSON,—I am out of the bill

on Wednesday, and should like to see your Pepinelli.—Yours, etc.,

"WALTER LACY."

"DEAR LACY,—I am free after the first piece, Friday, and want to see you in Pepinelli.—Yours, etc.,

"F. ROBSON."

On a later occasion, while playing Jeremy Diddler, at Drury Lane, Mr. Chester (rehearsing Fainwood), addressed me thus, "You don't remember me, Mr. Lacy. I played Buckingham, when a boy, at the Assembly Rooms, in Mile End." I shook hands, and asked him what Robson's patronymic was. "Button," was the reply; "who drew his inspiration from the grand Edmund Kean."

I made my own first bow as Tressel, in "Richard the Third," at the Pavilion Theatre, for the benefit of a popular East-End tragedian, who ended life sadly, committing suicide some twenty years after, while engaged as a poorly-paid law copyist in Chancery Lane.

My second attempt was at the Garrick Theatre, as Rambleton, in "Intrigue; or the Bath Road." I then began seriously to brush up my anatomy, but without much credit, for Mr. Headington, the celebrated surgeon (President of the College), who used to invite his pupils to an annual dinner at his house, questioned them one after the other as to their progress; but when my turn came, he addressed me thus: "Now, then! my Othello friend! give us a speech from Shakspeare."

One day—big with fate—Wilmott, the Anatomical Theatre beadle, came into the dissecting-room and informed me that a gentleman in a hackney-carriage wanted to speak to me.

The occupant of the hackney-carriage, evidently a Yankee, addressed me thus—

"Are you the young gentleman that wants to act?"

I replied, drawing myself up, "I have acted both in tragedy and comedy" (making the most of "Tressel" and "Rambleton").

"Well," said the American, "my wife, that's Madame Celeste, is just going to play the 'French Spy,' and we want a young actor to play her lover, Major Lafont."

"I'm ready," said I, and springing into the coach was conveyed to the Tottenham Street Theatre, then the Queen's; where I was introduced to a committee of actors, and forthwith engaged at a nominal salary of two guineas, under the management of Macfarren, father to my present Principal at the Royal Academy of Music, where I have been the Professor of Elocution sixteen years last Christmas. The parts played by me at shortest notice, were the said French Major; Selbourne, in "A Roland for an Oliver," and Baron Longville, in the "Foundling of the Forest," which last part was presented to me by Haynes—the author of the "French Spy," who played under the name of Norton—at four o'clock in the afternoon, with an urgent request that I would oblige the company by playing the same night. In my ignorance and delight at being among them, I went without a moment's delay into an adjoining public-house, kept by Perkins, a retired prize-fighter, ordered some tea, with eggs and bacon, and set to at the words, getting through the first part of the performance comfortably enough, when I became confused, and was pushed about into the various situations, and prompted through the remainder of the piece. The company being on the sharing system, my first Saturday yielded me exactly half-a-crown (a magnificent sum), which Dillon, the father of the popular tragedian, made me instantly melt

in beer, to pay my footing on the boards to the thirsty company. As no "Ghost" walked (that is, there was no treasury), the following Saturday, a meeting was called, and Mr. Macfarren, with a nice regard to the claims of his company, announced that we were at liberty to take ticket nights, waiving his right to half the receipts, by which liberal concession my pocket was soon replenished; moreover, as some of my fellow medical students expressed regret at not being made aware of my night, I speculated further by taking the "Sans Souci" Theatre in Leicester Street, now part of Russell's Furniture Warehouse, in Leicester Square, for which I paid Smythson, the lessee, five guineas, and played Jaffier, in "Venice Preserved." I shall never forget with what elation I trod the boards of that little private theatre, with its pretty portico, facing the Leicester Hotel, in a black velvet dress, and sable plumes, the stage being classically covered with green cloth, while the orchestra played a couple of overtures, and was about commencing a third, when The Belvidera, to my great relief, arrived from York. She was a ladylike creature of some experience, and a fine figure of a woman, who kept me in the right positions, notwithstanding the absence of rehearsal, and managed the embraces with delightful refinement. An amateur friend, Mr. Romford, a magnificent-looking man, played Pierre, and the following week took the theatre on his own account, playing Hastings to my Young Marlowe, in "She Stoops to Conquer." During the early part of the performance of Goldsmith's glorious comedy, a droll, though somewhat sad, incident occurred.

An old actor, named Southey (brother of the Laureate), whose lean figure and threadbare snuff-brown great-coat, and light wig,

reminded me of Sir Walter Scott's Peter Peebles, consented to play Old Hardcastle for five shillings, on condition that the tankard, which Diggory brings on, should be filled according to his prescription, to which my friend Romford readily assented, and consequently the "cup" of egg-wine and spice, regardless of expense, was prepared at the Leicester Hotel opposite, and sent over in a handsome silver flagon; but when Diggory brought it on and placed it in the hands of Southey, who was to have the first pull at it, his gaze of horror, when he lifted the lid, spoke for itself. The poor man let the lid fall on the empty flagon and fairly wept. The carpenters, smelling the warm spiced cup, could not resist the temptation, and passing it from hand to hand had drunk every drop of the precious liquor. I doubt if ever acting was so natural as Old Hardcastle's surprise and horror, with which we sympathized fully, as we were to be sharers in the delicious drink.

Having made the plunge, I looked out seriously for an engagement. A business friend of my father introduced me to John Cooper, who was living in the drawing-room, over his varnish warehouse, now Bacon's Hotel, in Great Queen Street, Long Acre. The actor, in a flowered dressing-gown, was busy studying for the Haymarket, the work in which theatre he called "galley slavery." Being asked if I could recite anything, I stated that I had learned a speech of William Tell's, and as he doubted if he had a book of that play, I said, eagerly, "I've got one in my pocket."

"Pocket, sir," said John Cooper, sternly, "*not* pocket."

This was my first lesson in elocution, which has since served me well. The interview resulted in a letter of recommendation

to the popular manager and celebrated actor, Mr. William Murray, of the T. R. Edinburgh, where I made my first bow in the country, as Count Montalban, in the comedy of the "Honeymoon," and having achieved the years allotted to man, after half a century of work, amidst much sunshine sprinkled with tears, that only seemed to have slaked the love of life and made it brighter, I am now happily fighting under the flag of the popular manager, and celebrated actor, Henry Irving, in mutual friendship and esteem. And, I thank God, in good health and fullest enjoyment of life!

An incident occurs to my mind, chiming in with original sing-song shops, where our merry midnight meals were made, although with an earlier appetite, we did the steak, chop, poached egg, or Welsh rabbit, with the accompanying pint of draught stout, at the "Rainbow," or "Cock," celebrated by the laureate of the present day, in his wonderful "Will Waterhouse."

Now, in those jolly days, before vocal music had advanced so far that for the most part the sweet singers gallop quite out of hearing of the words, when John Braham sang, with as distinct regard to the libretto as John Kemble gave to the language of Shakespeare, each tavern had its special attraction. The Cider Cellars claimed precedence for glees. Somers, Wollidge, and Robinson, with pure throats, impervious to atmospheric influence, would enjoy a rump steak and stout, and then with a bowl of steaming punch before them, would remove the clay pipe from the lips, and sing "Mynheer Vandunck," "The Darby Ram," and "Lady of Beauty, Away, Away." Going together with the force of a cataract, being fed on British beef, and pulling up with startling suddenness, they would deal out notes

like softest falling waters, as delicate as the dewdrop that "lies on the rose on a summer's morning;" but the incident mentioned had reference to Offley's, in Henrietta Street, Covent Garden, afterwards the house, for a time, of the Fielding Club, where Thackeray and the bright beings of literature and art solaced themselves before its establishment in Maiden Lane.

The crack singer at Offley's was a stylish young man, yclept "Appleyard," who enchanted the night with graceful and delicious ballads, and woe to the waiter who had the temerity to enter the room with "poached egg" or kidneys while Mr. Appleyard was singing.

Many years rolled on, until I had long merged from a medical student into a mature specimen of Shakespeare's "poor player," and was being rubbed down like a young horse after acting Henry VIII. for the hundredth time, the vigorous morrice dance being encored, in which it was my delight to lead out the dainty and classic Miss Heath, now Mrs. Wilson Barrett, who enacted Ann Bullen. The cue for the band under Jolly Jack Hatton, being, "Let the Music Knock it." Having thrown aside the sheepskin paddings of bluff King Hal, and put on dry underclothes, my dresser, as usual, going across to the "Wheatsheaf" tavern for a sandwich and some bitter beer, I addressed a solitary chorus-man, who sat at the end of the long room, in which I dressed. By the way, the incident I am about to relate could not have occurred during the run of "Henry

the Eighth," in Charles Kean's time. My dressing-room, at that time, was a small square one, in which Harley, Meadows, and James Vining also dressed. It evidently was in the previous Maddox management, when I often played in three and four pieces a night. Anyhow, I invited the amiable chorus-man to have some drink, and a brandy-and-soda was brought for him. We chatted pleasantly, especially about the days when I so much enjoyed those notes Ambrosian at the Cider Cellars and Coal Hole, down to the time when George Stansbury and Paul Bedford did their duets at Evans's Hotel in Covent Garden. But when I remarked that Appleyard was the most popular ballad-singer, the chorus-man asked me if I should remember the voice again if I heard it. I replied, "Certainly I should," when in somewhat tremulous, but sweet tones, he sang a verse of Appleyard's favourite ballad, "Alice Gray."

"Why, you are Appleyard!" I exclaimed.

"Yes," he said, "that was my name at Offley's, when I sang with such confidence and applause, but some of my patrons having induced me to acquire a knowledge of music, I lost my nerve as soon as I knew what I was about, and could no longer command a position."

This most amiable and respected gentleman was the father of two beautiful and accomplished actresses, not unknown to fame. The late Mr. Ranoe afterwards became prompter at the Italian Opera, and was the best of good fellows.



JOHN CAMPBELL: A TRUE STORY OF A BENEFIT.

By HENRY NEVILLE.



IN the apocryphal "good old times of the drama," necessity created many monsters. The "Monster Benefit" was one, and it really meant much more than it does in these rapid times of

railway and telegraphy. A benefit often paid the arrears of salary, and enabled the poor actor to pay off the obliging butcher, baker, or clear out the brokers, and generally to "hold up his head," as he called it, to carry *him*, and more particularly *his*, to the next town, which, with the difficulties of the coaching days of which I write, appeared so much farther off than now.

The expense and difficulty of postage and transit obliged many a fine actor to wear out his life in the provinces, and come to an obscure, modest grave in some out-of-the-way churchyard; his ability never having asserted itself, never having become, as it were, public property. His genius belonged only to a circuit, not as now, to the whole world. The word Benefit was thoroughly expressive. It was originated and intended to alleviate some of the many—too many—privations

and vexations to which the old actors were too frequently subject.

Vagabond life possessed especial fascination, there was so much *hope* in it. London was the goal to which every one earnestly strove.

The vital, pressing necessity for the particular benefit of which I write, was the honourable discharge of a long account for attendance and physic for a poor little innocent child, afflicted with fever first, then a lingering ailment which kept him in bed, many, many weary months, never to rise again straight and strong as other children.

The Campbells were leaving the town to try their fortune elsewhere; the doctor must be paid, he had been so kind, so patient, so attentive—all the best feelings of these good people's nature were invoked in the discharge of this sacred debt. Had he not saved their child, their only one? They were, beyond expression, grateful to God and the doctor. True, he had never asked for his fees, nor demanded payment for the physic, but perhaps for that very reason they would have parted with their showiest properties—well, even the clothes off their backs, for this interesting debt: indeed, they often discussed how to "raise the wind," and calculated to a nicety how much their scanty effects would produce. At last a benefit was suggested, as affording the readiest and most promising settlement. Our hero had hardly acquired that enviable position in the theatre which entitled him to a benefit; consequently, he would have to depend on an

attractive bill—never hinting at the great necessity which compelled the appeal to the public.

Arrangements were satisfactorily made with the liberal manager, and the benefit was to take place in something less than three weeks. Then came the great question of what to perform to tempt the public. Campbell was only the "walking gentleman" of the establishment, and the leading man had to be consulted. Campbell would have played "Richard the Third" because Edmund Kean had made it popular by his marvellous performance, and nothing seemed easier than to copy him, and create the same effect; but no, the leading man would play Richard, or nothing. "But you *must* play the leading part, John, on your benefit night; it's only right you should," said John's loving little wife. "Besides it's your opportunity; you are clever enough." Of course she thought him clever enough.

Dear soul. "Will he play Iago to your Othello?" capital suggestion? Would he? Yes, he would! with greatest pleasure, especially as Campbell had so short a time to study it, and would have to buy his "props;" and oh, rapture! possibly couldn't buy them, and would have to paint his legs as well as his handsome face, thought the leading man.

Genius never sticks at trifles—obstacles are only things to be overcome; nothing should stop him. John Campbell would play "Othello," and his wife's favourite piece, "Lilian, the Show Girl," a tragedy and a drama, "for this night only," with "Jump Jim Crow," and a jig in the middle, "By particular desire." But stop! by *whose* desire? for there was a truthfulness in these people which asserted itself even in their business transactions. "Wouldn't it be grand to obtain a patronage? Oh, delightful!" "Under the distinguished

patronage of——" in large letters when we get it, were the printer's instructions.

"I'll ask the Lord of the Manor," said Campbell; "nothing like the fountain-head; and who knows perhaps he might like to see his name in large letters all over the town. Then again, what a service he will render, if he only knew how much we need all that can be done for us; I'm sure he would. A long journey for three of us, one requiring especial accommodation. "Poor darling!" he ejaculates (sadly looking towards the bed at the window), "our petty debts, and that blessed doctor's bill." Just as he was rushing out (everything had to be done with a rush, between this and the benefit night) the little feeble child called to him, and asked why he didn't come to talk and play as he used to do? "I'm so lonely, papa, without you."

"I shall not be long, darling, it will all be over in a fortnight, and then we'll go to such a beautiful place, far away from here, where we shall be so happy, I hope, my pet; so happy, and want no more."

"Why, that's heaven, papa! Shall we go there? I'm so glad! I'll be very patient for a fortnight."

He kissed his boy and went his way, with confident steps and cheerful heart, big with excitement of his benefit preparations and prospects. He reached the great house, as it was called by those who didn't know its right name, and hesitated which of the many bells to pull. At last he pulled one of them, the "Servants;" he was too modest to claim a pull at the "Visitors'." He came to ask a favour, and there is something chilling in having to ask a favour, to say nothing of the ceremony of being shown in, and all the rest of it. However, he was not shown in; he had not to wait. His lordship had

that morning gone away, and they couldn't tell when he would return—"certainly not for a month, or five weeks." This was a great disappointment to Campbell, there was no time to get his lordship's reply by post, and after all it might be unfavourable. I only say *might*, for hope is always so powerful in aspiring actors; with some the actual is hardly positive enough: they still hope that something might come of it, and it often does.

He retraced his steps, ignoring the disappointment, and utilizing the time by studying his part, to the astonishment of many a wondering native, who listened with horror at the passionate speeches. Campbell became more and more engrossed in his study, and perfectly unconscious of the extraordinary interest he was creating, until at last he found himself roughly arrested by a frantic crowd, who wanted to hurry him off to an asylum as a raving lunatic. He explained, and some friendly person recognizing him, he was liberated.

His wife was, of course, very much amused when he told her his adventure. She thought it was a capital advertisement; in fact, he could not have had a more satisfactory gratuitous advertisement.

But the patronage which was looked upon as the all-important dignity of the occasion, who could he apply to? who was the next best? "Why, the colonel of the regiment quartered here, to be sure." He is, perhaps, better than the other. "Officers are always great patrons of the drama."

The next morning he dressed himself in his best: albeit, his best had seen good service in every modern play for the last three years; but the best *is* always the best, and must be so respected. At all events, he hastened to the barracks in his best; he sent

in his name, "Campbell," a lucky name, for the colonel was a Scotchman, and knew some Campbells, and liked them. "Good fighting clan." "Show him in." Heavens! he was shown in; he was admitted to the great presence, and couldn't help feeling extremely nervous, for the colonel was a grisly, shock-haired, double-barrelled, hundred-horse-power veteran, whose very presence inspired awe.

"Well, to what am I indebted for this visit, Mr. Campbell?" said he.

Humbly, Campbell revealed himself, and made his request. Now, why should that colonel raise his eyebrows, and twirl his huge muff of a moustache, and hide himself, as it were, behind a barricade of reserve too formidable for the simple occasion?

"Patronage!" growled he; "what for? Why should I bother myself with your affairs?"

"Well, sir," said Campbell, "I was urged to ask because of the great advantage it would be to us, and because we've had hard trials—my wife and I, with an invalid child, and——"

"I hate plays—won't go—nothing to give; show him out!"

And out he went in double-quick time, humbled and abashed, as though he had proposed something too terrible to be tolerated.

This colonel's crust was very thick indeed. No matter. "Wretched, indeed, is the mouse which has only one hole for a refuge. The colonel's not my only refuge; I'll try the captains to-morrow."

The captains were not so easy of access as he had found the colonel; at all events, after waiting an hour, Campbell was taken to two of them—charming fellows, with fair hair and cigarettes—most agreeable—would do anything—get others—fond of a play, especially

funny plays—pretty women, they hoped, by-the-bye. What is the lady's name who desires our patronage?"

"Oh! did I not tell you? I wish it for myself and family."

"By Jove! for yourself; do anything for the fair sex, anything, by Jove; but so ridiculous for a man—anything for a woman—very sorry. Good morning!" and away they went, without another word, leaving Campbell to find his way out as best he could.

"It is really very disheartening," he said to his wife, "I shall try no more." There were no more to try, but that was John's hopeful way of putting it. "Never mind, my dear," whispered his wife, with a kiss, "leave it vague, be satisfied with 'under distinguished patronage;' we shall have a good house, and all our patrons are distinguished."

The bills appeared with a flourish of trumpets—

UNDER DISTINGUISHED PATRONAGE.

UNPRECEDENTED ATTRACTION.

FOR THIS NIGHT ONLY;

and all the rest of it. Although not the leading man, Campbell was very popular, and the kindly public were acquainted with his misfortune—the poor bed-ridden child created the utmost sympathy.

Many and many whose business necessitated passing the house, had seen the little fellow in his bed at the window, and remarked the mother's tender care—many and many a sympathizing soul looked up to the window and blew kisses from the opposite side of the street, and the urchins of the neighbourhood used to play in front of the house, to amuse and interest the little prisoner; and so days slipped away and brought them nearer and nearer to the great occasion. The doctor's dreaded bill had been requested and duly forwarded—it was considerably made as

little as possible, still it amounted to the awful sum of twenty pounds.

Dare they hope for as much profit from the benefit? and then, how about the other things? Campbell had already made up his mind to walk his journey. She would have cheerfully shared his pilgrimage, but the child couldn't be left, so, perforce, they must go by coach.

While the wife was busy in the baby's bedroom, and Campbell was practising some important points, in his Daggerwood dressing-gown, there came a startling aristocratic knock. In an instant the house was in a flutter. "Some ladies for Mr. and Mrs. Campbell." "Good gracious! my dear, I'm so untidy; you go." "No, you go!" Whilst they were deciding who should go, and making themselves smart enough to be seen, the young ladies in the parlour were quietly inspecting the apartment, a little disappointed that it was not such a palace as they had seen on the stage, or pictured in their fond imaginations, and wondering whether the popular actor would shake hands, or merely bow: they hoped he would shake hands—so nice to think of it while he was acting—surely this is not his right abode! A pleasant chat, a few pounds worth of tickets for the benefit, the desired shake of the hand, and they went away assured he was the best actor living, and a perfect hero of romance.

As the eventful day approached, the Campbells became more and more familiar with friendly calls for tickets, and occasional small sums in excess of the theatre price from sympathizing patrons; indeed, they made a point of being "tidy" and fit to be seen every day. Nothing, however, delighted them so much as the following letter from the doctor, for they detected in it that noble

charity which shuns publicity, and effects its purpose without humiliating the recipient.

"Dear Mrs. Campbell,—Please send, me twenty-five pounds' worth of places for your benefit ; so many of my friends desire to be present on the occasion. I heartily wish you a bumper, and brilliant success in the plays you have selected. Notes enclosed," etc., etc.

At last the day arrives with all its intensified anxiety. Just such weather as sends people eagerly into the theatre with fair prospects of getting home dry and comfortable. Crowds at boxes, pit, and gallery. Campbell was elated beyond expression at the brilliant prospect before him. "Oh, Louie !" he said to his wife with a fond embrace, "we shall have such a glorious house ;" the wife lifted her sweet lips to receive her handsome husband's caress with a glad happy smile and tender pressure of the hand, to show the mutual sympathy of these united souls. "Yes, John, a glorious house ! Oh, the gladness of it. No debt, no doubtfully looking forward to the morrow, comfort for their little afflicted one, comparative wealth for months to come."

And now the bustle and noise of the filling house as they settle into their seats ; the pleasant recognition of neighbour and friend ; the tumultuous buzz, subsiding only as the notes of the musicians attract the ear.

Enthusiastic applause and calls after every act greeted our hero throughout the play ; he was completely successful. The leading man even admitted that "he was carried away," and "didn't think it was in him."

After the tragedy, Campbell came to the front, in accordance with the custom of that time, to thank his friends, and announce the repetition of the performance the following evening. Full of hopes and life, he acquitted himself admirably.

The affectionate wife's congratulations were reserved for home. She had now *her* part of the entertainment to perform, and sweetly pretty she looked as "Lilian, the Show Girl," upon which the curtain was about to rise. I shall not attempt a description of the piece ; suffice that it came successfully to the part where the gipsy lies hidden in the sack, and is shot at by Everard. "Stand aside," he says to Lilian, "I'll see if I can hit it." He fires high, according to theatrical custom—and—oh ! horror ! a groan, one pitiful groan, and a thud—and a brave, strong man fell from stair to stair—dead ! Conceive the agony of it. Dead !

At the moment of the shot, Campbell was coming downstairs from his dressing-room, with a half-uttered joke and a smile on his lips, he was so happy. There, at the foot of the stairs, he lay now motionless—no one could believe it. "Great God ! not shot ! the groan must have come from the boy in the sack. No ! raise him—carry him into the green-room—there is no wound—send for help—it may be but a fit—give air." Alas ! no air shall evermore give life to that breast ; no wife's tender voice rouse the heart's joy—he's dead.

An electric thrill pervades the place as by magic ; it is known everywhere. "Campbell's shot ! Campbell's shot !"

The leading man kneels by his side, and takes the yielding hand in his—no enmities now—all hushed before the Great King of Terrors. "Don't let the wife in !" "Shut the door ; spare her the knowledge even for a short hour !" But no, the terrible truth is not to be kept even from the ear that least would hear it. An undefinable fear, a ghastly dread, has taken possession of the woman's heart, the last to know what has happened. Kindly hands attempt to draw her from the

fatal fascination of that room. Averted eyes, expressive silence, speak more eloquently than words—she shudders! “What is it? why do you hold me back? Something terrible has happened—I must, I will know!”

“Keep back, Mrs. Campbell, it is all right.” But the tears in the speaker’s eyes belie his words.

The wife dashes forward, makes her way through the unwilling crowd, who fain would spare her that sight of death. A piteous wail comes from her tortured heart, “Oh, John! my husband!”

Her eyes starting from her head, she looks round on the pitying faces, who can do nothing to help her. She looks, at his, that one face which was her world—“he’s gone! for ever gone!” At that moment the kind old doctor arrived; the little hope which might have lurked in friendly bosoms was soon dispelled. One drop of blood, one drop alone revealed the cause of death. There, over the region of the heart, was a wound almost too small to be seen, but enough to send him to eternity. Let us leave this scene of horror!

“My papa! my papa! oh come to me,” cried the boy, with outstretched hands, for he had lain awake all night, wondering why none of them came home. The door opened, but not to bring to him the loving face he longed so much to see.

The mother was carried into the room prostrate. They take the affrighted child from her side, and as they carry the little shivering, trembling form from the room, the mother’s stony eyes follow him—follow him, and then a hunger comes to them. A broken voice is heard, “My boy! my boy!” and there, locked in the mother’s arms, they leave the orphaned and the widowed together.

My sad story is told, and if it has shown

that an actor’s life is not all a summer holiday, that his triumphs are not always victories, that his joys may be tempered with sorrows, my purpose is answered.

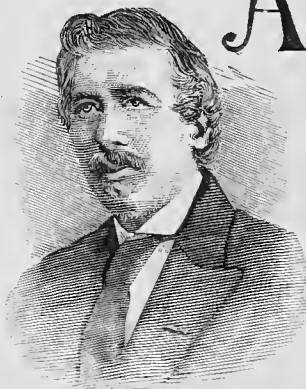
The ever-kind doctor exerted himself to find the cause of death, and tracing the course of the tiny wound over the heart, he discovered that a *pin*—a common *pin*—had entered the heart, and lodged there. How it got into the gun no one could tell.

Mrs. Campbell found friends in her great trouble, and the public espoused her cause.

Time, the great healer, brought its softening balm; but no time could efface the memory of John Campbell’s tragic end.

THE STORY OF A GOOD GOBLIN.

By E. L. BLANCHARD.



A LITTLE more than forty years ago—or, for the satisfaction of those who insist on chronological accuracy, on the evening of Saturday, September 15th, 1838—I was waiting at

the wing of the Royal English Opera, as the Lyceum was then called, to accompany my early friend, George Wieland, to the City of London Theatre. The famous pantomimist, who was here filling up his time before the

recommencement of the Drury Lane season, had promised to give his services that night for the benefit of a well-known clown at the East End, who stood sadly in need of some substantial help through sudden pressure on his pecuniary resources, caused by the afflictions that had befallen his family. It was well known in the profession that the purse and personal services of George Wieland were ever at the disposal of his more unfortunate brethren; but in this case he had taken especial interest, as the poor wearer of the motley supplicating his aid was a man of acknowledged worth and ability, though his talents had never enabled him to secure more than a scanty subsistence for a family increasing out of all proportion to his reputation.

Old playgoers need not be told that Wieland was an artist in his peculiar line, excelling all who had come before him, and who has never been equalled since. He was about twenty-eight years of age at this time, but had been upon the stage since a child; and his marvellous embodiment of the droll imp in the ballet of "The Daughter of the Danube" had then placed him at the highest point of his particular branch of the profession. In the dangerous department of the art to which he had devoted himself with so much zeal, he had suffered the usual penalties of popularity; and after being shot up traps and sent flying off on wires at perilous heights for nearly a quarter of a century, the reflection that so many of his limbs were left unbroken used to astonish him in his frequent moments of serious meditation. He was, however, no mere acrobat or gymnast. His powers of expressing purpose by action were of an extraordinary kind; and when Edmund Kean, after witnessing some of his remarkable panto-

mimic performances, used to say "that boy could convey, by gestures alone, the significance of every line of 'Hamlet,'" the compliment conveyed was felt to be only a fair tribute to the cleverness of an exponent of what is now almost a lost art.

On the Saturday night referred to, Wieland was playing, for the twenty-eighth time, his popular character of Diavoleto, in Alexander Macfarren's now almost forgotten dramatic composition, known as "The Devil's Opera," in which Miss Priscilla Horton as Pepino, the page, and Miss Poole as Signora Giovannina, the *gouvernante*, rendered with such admirable effect the best songs of the composer. In the last scene, Wieland had to rapidly run down to the footlights on his knees, a feat of physical dexterity on which he had always prided himself. The carelessness of a stage-carpenter had left the trap by which the pantomimist had ascended a few moments before, above the level, and the result was a severe injury to the knee-cap of the performer, that compelled the immediate descent of the curtain. Borne to the wing in an insensible condition, Wieland was placed on a couch, while the nearest surgeon was sent for. When he attended, the painful nature of the accident suggested the ready opinion that many days, if not weeks, must elapse before the pantomimist could appear in public again. Wieland, suffering most acute tortures, feebly murmured that he had promised, in the course of the next hour, to appear at the "City of London," in his character of the imp in the ballet of "The Daughter of the Danube," and that if disappointed, the audience would probably resent their displeasure by hooting at the poor clown who was taking a benefit that night, and injure, in many ways, the prospect of

providing for the poor sick family depending on the extra attraction that had been offered. Medical remonstrance was of no avail, and the coach, coming to the stage door of the Lyceum at the appointed time, Wieland was helped into the vehicle, and I accompanied him, in his state of acute suffering from the injured limb, to the theatre then recently opened in Norton Folgate. The house was full to overflowing, and relying on the unfailing punctuality of the prominent "star," the overture to "The Daughter of the Danube" was, at the instigation of the prompter, proceeding at the appointed hour. There was but a short time left for assuming the needful costume, during which brief period Wieland fainted three times from the extreme physical agony he was enduring, but the promise he had so generously given had been faithfully kept, and though the weird antics of the amusing goblin never created more merriment than on that occasion, and tears, wrung by pain, streamed frequently from under the mask during the memorable combat with Gilbert, the good-natured self-sacrificing representative of the German goblin exerted himself more than usual, and even complied with the earnest demand of the audience for a repetition of the principal movement. "This will lay me up for another month," said Wieland feebly to me as we parted after midnight, at the door of his house in a street near Bedford Square; "but, thank heaven! I have helped to put into the pockets of the poor fellow a good hundred pounds, for the benefit of the sick children he is working so hard to support."

LANDLADIES.

By H. J. BYRON.



SOME people imagine an actor's happiness to depend upon his success with his audience, his comfort in the theatre, or the disposition and fair dealing of his manager. Not a

bit of it. I have acted, sir, in palatial "grand opera" houses, and performed in what were little better than booths; I have ministered (at least, I flatter myself I have) to the pleasure of the intellectual palate of "Modern Athens;" I have excited the risibility (in the serious drama) of the warm-hearted and fun-loving Hibernians; I have shouted myself hoarse for the delectation of the denizens of Bullocksmithy, and I have roused the bucolic enthusiasm of the Bœotian inhabitants of the "agricultural districts." My experiences have been long and varied; "here to-day and gone to-morrow" (very often gone to-morrow). I have flitted (Caledonian and suggestive phrase!) like a bee from one Thespian flower to another, without making any particular amount of honey, but with a considerable gathering of experience as to the peculiarities of that indispensable and most important entity, the "theatrical landlady."

Yes, sir, that particular individual has it

in her power to render your sojourn an agreeable one, an endurable one, an irritating one, or a maddening one, as the case may be. I have passed through all of those phases. Amongst them, perhaps, the maddening predominated. To return to my starting point. A provincial actor—and we are all provincial actors now-a-days—may endure with equanimity the many outside and professional annoyances which beset him, provided he lights upon a landlady with a remnant of a conscience and a limited knowledge of cookery. I have, after knowing the type for years, succeeded in reducing it to three classes, according to a very simple rule of my own, which I have never known to fail. It has the advantage of being a rule, or rather a test, which you can very speedily apply and prove its efficacy. I divide landladies into three classes. First, those who leave your brandy alone; second, those who appropriate it defiantly; third, those who take you for a fool, and fill up the space hitherto occupied by your Cognac with water. Occasionally your respect for the first-mentioned landlady is a little dashed by frequent recurrence of “faintness,” “all-overishness,” “spasms,” and other sudden attacks to which ladies who let lodgings are peculiarly liable, and which demand, or at least suggest, an immediate donation of an alcoholic nature. Occasionally these slight ailments become a little wearisome in their frequent repetition; if so, you have no alternative but to mislay the key of the sideboard, and then it only too often happens that the *first* class landlady develops into a furtive and burglarious specimen of number two. Sometimes you may imagine you have done a clever thing by securing apartments with a total-abstaining family. But there is generally a servant of anti-teetotal proclivities, or

an all-absorbing cat who has refused to be converted to the tenets of Father Matthew.

About the proceedings of the second class of landlady, there is a certain straightforwardness, not to say boldness, which to an extent robs them of their irritating quality, and you *can* prove the theft if you are rash enough to go to extremes. In early life, I permitted my indignation, on more than one occasion, to get the better of my judgment, and I have tackled the tippler. My accusation has been received in various ways, ranging from indignant denial to tearful and penitential confession. I have, however, been once threatened with immediate expulsion; twice drawn into fistic encounters with enraged husbands; three times compelled to apologize; and more often than I care to mention have been met with such an agonized look of wrongly-suspected virtue, that I have been compelled to sullenly swallow my indignation, which has been all my landlady has left me. I was some years in endeavouring to “nonplus” this miserable creature. At length, Tom Tragico (an assumed name, I will admit), who “liked his glass”—which means invariably half-a-dozen—put me up to a wrinkle.

“Keep it in a flask,” he said, “and the flask in your pocket.” This advice I followed, and foiled many a female inebriate for a considerable period. Still, it is degrading to walk about the world with a spirit-flask as a perpetual “hand-property,” and in unguarded moments one is apt to bring it out in the presence of uncongenial souls, or to sit upon it suddenly when in solitary seclusion.

But as for the landlady who robs you of your liquor and substitutes water, no words of mine or anybody else's are sufficiently severe and scathing to meet her case. To

those who have been born with a palate (which, I believe, is generally how they *are* born), or who have by long experience learnt the difference between the article "neat" and the article sophisticated and weakened, the act is one which it is difficult to bear without "high words," which I have always translated as "low language."

I am a mild man myself, sir, and do not, as a rule, indulge in expletives; but I have been occasionally driven to forget the sex of my larcenous landlady, and to "round" on that wretched impostor in a manner which has brought forth remonstrances from the neighbours. But to be looked upon as a FOOL! I put it to *you*, sir, as a judge of the article—*isn't* it—eh?

Yes, sir, I have failed (frequently), and have been triumphant (at intervals). I have had "benefits" which placed me on a pinnacle (so to speak), and others which have left me rather worse off than I was before (which was unnecessary, and one would have thought impossible), and as a manager I have suffered much indignity from a confiding, though somewhat inefficient "company." BUT (and I should like the "but" to be printed large) I have "never, no, never—well, hardly ever"—undergone the torments I have endured in "theatrical lodgings."

But, sir, I have been told by those who (I presume) have been in them, or rather behind them, that there are no clouds without a silver lining. I believe it. There are landladies and landladies. As a man, I should be sorry to conclude my remarks without bearing testimony to the landlady who, "does good by stealth and blushes to find it—pay day;" to the kindly soul who saves her impecunious lodger every penny she can, and frequently helps him on his way with a loan from her own too slender purse.

There are very many of these generous, warm-hearted women dotting the provinces, taking a keen interest in the profession of their temporary lodgers, reading their *Era* regularly, and always sticking up for the honour of the craft. Bless 'em!

HOW I PLAYED PRINCE ALFRED.

By W. TERRISS.



I HAD just returned from a long voyage, when I was a lad of tender years of age, and being invited by a wealthy but eccentric relative, to join him in a trip to the country, I gladly accepted the offer. We started from Paddington, my uncle engaging a special saloon carriage, which, unhappily for us, as the sequel will show, was one of those occasionally used by the Royal Family, gorgeous as to its exterior, and bearing the royal arms.

I was wearing my uniform of a midshipman at the time, and was at first highly delighted with the unusual excitement caused by our carriage whenever we entered a station; but the interest in us and our proceedings became at length so marked that we began to feel somewhat uneasy, and we endeavoured, but in vain, to find some solution to the mystery—every hat being raised

as we entered a station, and rounds of cheering heard when we moved off—what could it, in Heaven's name, mean?

On arriving at our destination, Weston-super-Mare, amazement reached its climax—the station being crammed with a fashionable assemblage, our reception by the officials being simply overpowering. Dazed and bewildered, we entered a carriage, and drove at once to the Bath Hotel, surrounded and followed by an enthusiastic crowd. As I bowed frequently in acknowledgment of this mysterious and unaccountable greeting, the cheers and shouting were redoubled, and I sank back in blushing confusion, wondering what on earth my uncle or myself had done to merit such a princely reception. It was not until the next morning that we were enlightened by one of the doctors of the town, who had occasion to call at the hotel. The royal saloon carriage was the fatal cause, and carrying, as it did, a young midshipman in uniform, rumour at once proclaimed him no other than His Royal Highness Prince Alfred, travelling, of course, with his tutor. Explanations ensued, and the doctor promised to do his best to disabuse the expectant public of their mistake.

But it wouldn't do. Royalty didn't visit Weston-super-Mare every day; and the wish being father to the thought, the wave of credulity swept reason and common-sense away, and what was only a strong suspicion before, now became a certainty. A large crowd surrounded the hotel, and cries being raised for "the Prince—the Prince!" I appeared upon the balcony, and with the nearest approach to a princely demeanour that I could assume at so short a notice, I kept on bowing and smiling in response to the cheering, until I suddenly disappeared, making a decidedly rapid and humiliating

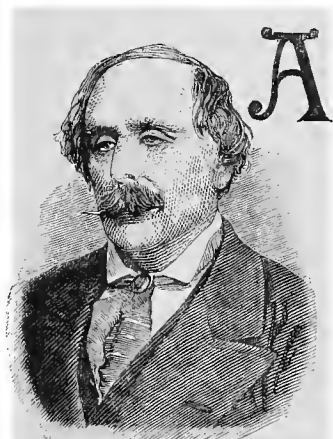
exit, for my uncle had hold of my coat-tail, and pulled me back into the room, telling me not to make a fool of myself. To show the extent to which the delusion spread, I may mention that the church bells were set ringing in honour (of what was termed) the auspicious event. A meeting of the leading men of the place was convened to discuss what shape a demonstration (in honour of the Royal visitor) should assume. The excitement reached such a pitch at last, that the doctor and others considered it advisable for us to leave, to escape further annoyance, as when the truth became known, a corresponding reaction would set in. Before we had time, however, to order a carriage to drive us to the station, an enterprising fly proprietor placed at our disposal a barouche, attached to which were four resplendent grey tits, in which we started, and on our way to the terminus received a perfect ovation from the assembled thousands, hats waving and handkerchiefs fluttering at all the windows as we passed; and as we drove through High Street, a chemist with ultrapatriotic feelings forced in at the window a large bottle of scent, with an accompanying note, which contents flattered me upon my long line of Royal ancestors; and another patriot forwarded to the hotel an immense bouquet, accompanied with a glowing and flattering epistle. Having taken our tickets, we steamed out of the station (which was crammed with people), the public outside grumbling in no measured tone at no Royal Prince being among them, and many still unwilling to believe that so extraordinary a mistake had been innocently made.

I have kept to this day the empty scent-bottle and amusing letter as a memento of a most extraordinary case of mistaken identity. Since then many years have passed away,

and I, too, have played many parts, but none of them have left such an abiding impression on my memory as when I was unintentionally cast for the leading part of Prince Alfred, and played it on the shortest possible notice. In the *Bristol Times and Mirror* of March 8, 1864, there is an amusing column, headed, "An Extraordinary Case of Mistaken Identity." It is based upon this incident, and the chief actor was myself.

A NIGHT WITH KOTZEBUE.

By J. PALGRAVE SIMPSON.



AN accident had detained me in one of our large towns in the Midland district. It was no cotton or iron metropolis; but it was a town of considerable importance in its own esteem,

and yet a dull-looking town, in which I had not a single acquaintance. I found, to my annoyance, that I could not proceed comfortably to my destination—Liverpool—until the following morning. What was I to do with the best part of a day before me? Well, the day might be dragged through in some sort of fashion. But how about the long dreary evening? The thought of the coffee-room at the hotel in solitude was deadening.

Was there a theatre? "Of course there is," was the indignantly given reply of the head-waiter. Was there any performance? Equally, of course. So I procured a play-bill; and my eyes were greeted with the promise of being more or less bored with the lugubrious play of "The Stranger." The principal characters—printed in large type—being undertaken by the favourite tragedian, Mr. Bensley, and Miss Clara Carmichael (from the principal London theatres). Both these celebrated artists were utterly unknown to me, although I had a tolerably extensive acquaintance with "the principal London theatres," but they were evidently not unknown to fame of some kind. I might have preferred a more genial entertainment. However, "*Va pour* a night with Kotzebue," I said. No, I did not. I only "mentally ejaculated" the resolve.

I whiled away my time, as best I could, in visiting what I was informed were "the interesting monuments" of the town, without, however, having had one single spark of interest lighted in my wearied soul; then returned to my hotel, where I had ordered my dinner at an early hour, in order to be able to bestow my worthiest appreciation on the great artists "from the principal London theatres."

As I entered the coffee-room, I saw one table, which had been evidently laid out for my humble repast. But my domain had been invaded. A male form was already seated at this table, with its head bowed down on the cloth, between its outstretched arms. Was the man asleep, or drunk, or prostrate with despair? At all events, I considered the table mine by right; and that right I determined to assert. So, operations were commenced with a loud "Hem!" This rasping indication of my presence was of no avail. A

louder "Hem!" had no better effect. At last, with a third "Hem!" I gently placed my hand on the man's shoulder. He slowly lifted his head; and, to my astonishment, I saw before me the face of my dear friend, Charlie Campbell, whom I had never lighted on for some two years or more—as is very generally the case between dear friends, who are whirled hither and thither in the vast maelstrom of London. Charlie sprang up with alacrity on seeing me. After the unavoidable enthusiastic greetings and exclamations of surprise at thus coming together, he consented to partake of my imminent dinner. The bell was rung; and the necessary orders were given for two.

When left alone, we gave way to the questionings usual on such occasions. What had we both been doing this long age past? My tale was soon told. But Charlie—what part had he been enacting in life? His heavy and embarrassed sigh was certainly not an auspicious prologue to his answer. He had married a charming woman, I had heard. Another sigh! "And awfully happy, I suppose," was my suggestion, somewhat doubtfully made. He shook his head mournfully. What was it? Our old friendship authorized me, I thought, to ask his confidence. He declared that he was most happy to bestow it on me. He had long sought an opportunity of relieving his mind; and to whom could he better tell everything that was weighing on heart and soul than to me? Flattering this, at all events!

His tale, although a common one, was certainly not a pleasant one to hear. As I had been told, he had married a charming woman. It had been a love match. Each had adored the other. At first, Charlie's happiness had been "more than that of mortal man." But, presently, occasional

differences of temper arose. His "little woman" was given to perpetual "nagging." His susceptibilities were wounded daily, until his life became insupportable. Insane fits of jealousy, without cause, on the side of the wife, had burst, like perpetual thunderstorms, on the romance of his married life. Now, one thunderstorm may clear the air, and be an augury of fine weather afterwards; but thunderstorms of daily occurrence must din any poor married man into madness. At length, it was agreed, by mutual consent, to disagree entirely, and for ever. A separation ensued, on the understanding that husband and wife were never to meet again. Charlie's wife had gone to live with her mother, who had since died. He knew nothing of her whereabouts. She had never once written to "the monster," as she had sweetly designated him, since the day they had parted.

It was evident that Charlie Campbell was not a whit happier—poor fellow!—in his state of grass-widowerhood than he had been in his troubled married life. I wrung his hand sympathetically, and groaned congenially to the heavy sighs with which he ended his sad story.

"But what are you doing now?" I said, after a pause. "And what brings you here?"

Charlie looked a little ashamed. But, presently, with a sort of apologetic smile, he said, "Well, you see, old fellow, I had nothing to do with my solitary life. I yearned for employment and forgetfulness. You remember the success I used to have as an amateur actor. Although warned that I was crossing the Rubicon from respectability to Bohemianism, I burned my ships, and went on the stage. And, I may add, that I have been very decently successful."

I gently murmured that my eyes had

never been greeted with the name of Mr. Charles Campbell in the *Era* or any other theatrical paper.

"Likely enough!" said Charlie, smiling. "I have taken the stage name of Randal Harwood; and under that designation I am not quite unknown to fame."

"Hem!" was my somewhat deprecating and doubting exclamation. "But what brings you here?"

"My last engagement had terminated," he said; "and I heard there was a possible opening in old Mangle's company here. I came over, saw the Manager of my hopes, and have received the unsatisfactory but decisive answer, 'Company full—salary list already too heavy—very sorry—cannot find room for you—et cetera, et cetera.' And so I have had my journey for nothing, and must drag my weary sock and buskin, without rest for the sole of my foot, elsewhere. This is hyperbole, I know. I mean I am about to take train to another town."

I wished my old friend "luck" and better chance; and I was talking over with him his "line," and his hopes and aspirations in his future career on the stage, when dinner was solemnly brought in by the solemn head-waiter. An extra genial bottle was ordered; and we "fell to" with spirits which had considerably risen in the barometric scale of nervous temperament.

We were thus progressing most favourably in our repast, when an elderly gentleman rushed into the coffee-room in an evident state of great excitement. He wore a suit of musty black, and a broad-brimmed hat, curled up on either side, like a pug-dog's tail. When removed, it displayed a head bald as a billiard ball.

"Ah! Mr. Harwood. There you are!" he exclaimed, before the solemn waiter in

attendance could interfere. "You can do me a most essential service. For heaven's sake, tell me—are you up in 'The Stranger'?"

"I have played it frequently," was Charlie's reply. "My study is good; and I have no doubt I could wing the part at a moment's notice. What do you mean?" Then he courteously introduced me to Mr. Mangle.

"What do I mean!" cried the excited manager, paying but little attention to the introduction. "Why! Bensley is taken bad—can't play—inebriated, I've no doubt. To-night is one of my grand bespeaks—the militia officers—band in attendance—no time to change the bill—can't shut the house up, and lose a lot of money. In one word—can you undertake to play 'The Stranger'? Sal. no object. Will pay you handsomely. Forgive my abrupt refusal this morning. It is a matter of life and death, sir!" He wiped his anxious and perspiring brow, with a glare of mad excitement, as if his life had actually depended on the answer.

"You can find me the dress?" said Harwood.

"Bensley's will fit you to a nicety."

"I will do it," replied my friend.

"You know there is no time for rehearsal," gasped Mangle. "The play begins in an hour."

"I know the business," replied my friend, composedly. "If necessary I shall contrive to conform myself to your, doubtless, refined stage management."

"Ah! you have saved my life!" cried the enthusiastic manager. "You will come?"

"I will be at the theatre in a quarter of an hour."

The distracted Mr. Mangle darted out of the room in an evidently less distracted frame of mind than that in which he had entered

it. He had even a beaming expression on his face.

"Do you mean to say you are actually going to play his part without any rehearsal?" I asked eagerly.

"I shall do my best; and I have no doubt I shall get through the whole creditably," answered Charlie, calmly.

After a few more hurried words we separated—Charlie to go to the theatre, and look through his part in "The Stranger," as speedily as possible, and I to clear my brain with a cup of coffee.

I was in my place in the theatre some little time before the curtain was raised, being unusually excited and nervous respecting the result of my friend's performance, and being disposed to think, as friends so often do, that Charlie was going to make a "confounded fool" of himself. The house was what might be considered a "bumper." The militia officers, in their most gorgeous uniforms, a very large female attendance—evidently attracted by the military element—and a pit and gallery crammed by occupants, for whom the militia band—if not the play—was an attraction. No wonder poor old Mangle considered that his closing the house would be a death-blow to him.

The play began; and I verily believe my heart was beating a double tattoo. The time came for the appearance of "The Stranger;" and Mr. Randal Harwood entered amidst considerable applause—a due apology having been previously made for him on account of the "serious indisposition" of the popular favourite, Mr. Bensley.

Charlie was a very handsome fellow; and his appearance, although his expression was gloomy, as befitted the part, prepossessed the audience in his favour. His diction was good, and, thank heavens! not stagy. His

action quiet, but appropriate. I was decidedly pleased with him; and I recovered partially from my nervous trepidation.

Presently Miss Clara Carmichael swept on the stage as "Mrs. Haller." The "tremendous reception" awarded her, proved at once that she was a great local favourite. Certainly her appearance was captivating. She was a very handsome young woman. Her manner was ladylike and graceful. But in spite of her experience in the principal London theatres, as duly announced on the bills, I could not but fancy that she showed traits of being something of a novice. My mind, however, was so pre-occupied with Charlie, that I paid the leading actress less heed than I should have done otherwise.

The play dragged on its somewhat weary course, enlivened by the comic scenes of Solomon, played by the great Mangle himself, and Peter, by the favourite low comedian; and I had arrived at the end of the fourth act without any special sense of tedium. The scene came when "The Stranger" was to be introduced, for the first time to "Mrs. Haller." Never shall I forget it! The start, and the surprised and agonized look of the actor, as he gazed on his guilty wife—the affrighted shriek of the actress as she stood unexpectedly before her injured husband, then tottered, collapsed, and fell fainting on the floor—were pieces of acting which could not be surpassed by the greatest artists of the day.

The applause, in which I joined *con amore*, was tremendous; and I had scarcely recovered from my emotion, when I was tapped on the shoulder, and requested, by an official of the theatre, to come round behind the scenes. Mr. Harwood *must* see me, I was told; and Mr. Mangle would be "greatly obliged."

I was "passed round" by a mysterious door, and ushered into Mr. Harwood's dressing-room. He was walking up and down in great excitement, while Mangle sat by in a state of utter collapse, with his hands thrust under his Solomon's wig, scratching his bald skull.

"It's no use," cried Charlie. "I can't go on again. I won't go on! It's my own wife, old boy—it's my own wife! I cannot face her any more! I am smitten to the heart! Let an apology be made at once!"

"And Miss Carmichael, too," cried the despairing manager, "swears—I mean protests—that she cannot put foot on the stage again to-night—too exhausted—a real fainting fit. What's to be done?—what's to be done?"

"There is nothing for it but an apology, and the farce," cried Charlie, striding up and down.

"Look here!" said I to the manager. "Do you go again to Miss Carmichael. Use all your arts—and I know your diplomacy is sure to be first-rate—that of a manager of your tact and experience always is—to persuade her to waive all private feeling, and finish the play. Her local popularity—which she would endanger—etc., etc.—you know what to say."

Mangle disappeared. It was difficult, with all the *finesse* I could manage to bring to my aid, to persuade my agitated friend to

consent to face his wife once more. It was but for a brief moment, I argued; and they would then part again to meet no more. At length he consented; although his excitement seemed almost to have deprived him of his reason.

I remained behind the scenes to witness the *dénouement* of the play at the wings. The trying scene of meeting came at last. The emotion of both husband and wife was excessive. But they contrived to speak their words in choking voice; and when Mrs. Haller was received in the arms of her reconciled husband, and glided fainting to the ground, Charlie bent over her and impressed a frantic kiss on her lips. The curtain fell. Never, perhaps, was there ever such enthusiastic applause heard in that theatre. It was impossible to resist the splendid call. Husband and wife appeared before the audience—hand in hand.

Need I expatiate on what ensued? I found them, after a few minutes, seated side by side. Could I doubt that the mimic reconciliation of the stage had become a reconciliation in reality?

I discreetly retired, and left for Liverpool the next morning; and I afterwards received a letter from Charlie to tell me, that, after their mutual vows of forbearance and conciliation, he really believed that he had entered on a new life of happiness, all owing, he admitted, to that memorable "Night with Kotzebue."



OUR LITTLE WORLD.

By JOHN HOLLINGSHEAD.



LARGE as the world doubtless is, and easy as it now is to go from place to place, there are few of us who do not live and move and have our being in a very limited circle. We are drawn

towards a particular spot, and once there we remain as fixed and immovable as the dog tied to a stake. We dream of the great world outside our narrow limits, but we work with various degrees of contentment and success on our little yard of space. As we have been drawn there at first by some powerful influence, so we proceed to draw others. Our companions often strike root on the same spot, and by degrees we found a special colony in a great city.

My particular spot in the great world—the spot on which I have been more or less settled for years before the *GAIETY THEATRE* was built or thought of—is the spot on which that theatre and its surroundings now stand. The first periodical that ever excited my literary ambition—the pioneer of all the cheap weekly magazines—was published in the Strand, at a little stationer's shop which now forms part of the *Field* office. It was called

the *Mirror*, and its proprietor was a Mr. Limbird. The *Mirror* died long before its proprietor, and Mr. Limbird appeared to me to look out of his small tradesman's window with dreamy wonder at the flock of magazines and periodicals which fluttered round him.

At the corner of Wellington Street and the Strand—belonging to the owners of the *Field*, the *Law Times*, etc.—was the office of the *Critic*, a journal of the *Athenæum* type, to which I was an occasional contributor.

My first serious step in literature, however, was made in *Household Words*, under the editorship of the late Charles Dickens, and the office of this journal (now the office of the *Army and Navy Gazette*) stands next to the stage-door of the Gaiety Theatre. If I were to take a few bricks out of the back wall of the room in which I was first introduced to Charles Dickens, and in which I first began my work as an author and a journalist, I could look on to the stage of the Gaiety Theatre, where eleven years ago I first began my work as a theatrical manager. On the other side of the theatre—in Catherine Street—was the office of the *Illustrated Times*—a weekly paper, half magazine—to which, in company with Edmund Yates, G. A. Sala, the Brouchs, and scores of others, I was a contributor under the editorship of Mr. Henry Vizetelly. When the so-called famine in London occurred in 1861, I was asked by Mr. Algernon Borthwick to write a series of articles in the *Morning Post* on the condition of the London poor, and these articles were reprinted under the title of

"Ragged London," and published by Messrs. Smith, Elder, and Co. Looking out of my managerial room at the Gaiety Theatre, across a narrow yard, I can almost see into the room at the *Morning Post* office, where every night for about a fortnight I was engaged in recording my melancholy experiences as "Our Special Commissioner."

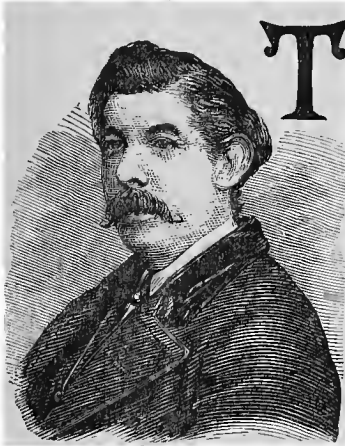
I may pass by the *Athenæum*, which is published a few doors above the Gaiety in Wellington Street, and to which I was an occasional contributor, and proceed to my first introduction to Mr. Toole. I was introduced to him at the corner of Wellington Street, in the Strand, by the late Mr. H. Widdicombe, and I found him living in chambers at the Wellington Street entrance of the Exeter Arcade, exactly on the site of the present stage-door of the Gaiety. Here it was that I discussed with him the prospects of my first farce — "*The Birthplace of Podgers*" — which he ultimately produced at the Lyceum Theatre, opposite. Here it was also that he entertained me and our common friend, Henry Irving, who had just made his first appearance in London at the Princess's Theatre, in a piece called "Ivy Hall" — an adaptation by the late John Oxenford of *Le Roman d'un Jeune Homme Pauvre*. As we looked out of the window into the street, Henry Irving hardly expected to become the possessor of the theatre opposite, and I certainly never expected that a theatre would be built for me almost underneath our feet.

My connection with the Lyceum Theatre opposite did not finish with the production of my first farce. I made my first appearance as an amateur burlesque actor, and as an amateur pantomimist on the same boards, in both cases, of course, for a charitable object. My "first appearance on any stage,"

however, was not made at the Lyceum, but at the neighbouring Covent Garden Theatre, several years earlier, and under somewhat peculiar circumstances. Wandering one night past the stage door of old Covent Garden, I found it open and unguarded, and with the boldness and curiosity of youth (I am speaking of 1845) I darted in and found myself, in a few seconds, amongst endless machinery and in total darkness. Groping for some little time, with half the romance of the "Arabian Nights" in my head, and an immense amount of theatrical dust in my hands, I saw a glimmer in the distance, and making towards it, found it to be a gas-jet projecting from the wall. On the ground I saw a piece of brown paper, and lighting this I guided myself still further, until I came to some ladder-steps. I mounted these, and pushed open a door which admitted me to the back of the stage. The whole house was before me, brilliantly lighted, and full of people, but screened from my view by a high wooden barrier which was built across the stage. Climbing up this barrier, by the aid of a few rough projections and considerable skill in this kind of work, I was soon able to look over the top, and I found that I was an uninvited guest on the platform at one of the great Anti-Corn Law League Meetings. The speaker, I think, was the late W. J. Fox, a short man with a Beethoven head, and a practised orator. In a semi-circle behind him were Richard Cobden, John Bright, Colonel Perronet Thompson, Milner Gibson, and many others whose faces had been made familiar to me by popular portraits. This was my first appearance on any stage, but not my last, and I think I have said enough to prove that I, at least, have not wandered far from a given centre.

THE PHANTOM THEATRE.

By ROBERT REECE.



THE time having, in my opinion, at length arrived, when the most impressive experience of my life should be revealed, I will endeavour to place it on record frankly and

simply; unimpeded by digression, unembellished by comment; leaving the consideration of my narrative to the thoughtful readers of these pages, and (preliminarily) scorning the inevitable jests of the sceptical and frivolous.

My name is Sparkle de Witt. I am a barrister and author of some standing; eking out the precarious subsistence derivable from my legal practice, by dramatic efforts, which have gained for me more reputation than pecuniary importance. My temperament is sanguine, and my imagination fervid; but I possess a logical brain, and am neither affected by sentiment, nor misled by credulity. These initiatory remarks being necessary to indicate that I am the last man in the world to be betrayed by simple hallucination, cannot fairly be regarded as episodal.

Some two years since (the precise date is of no importance to the reader), I was sitting in my writing-room, wearied with work,

worried by stormy and unsatisfactory rehearsals, and regretting, from the bottom of my soul, that Fate had selected me for the line of life I follow. The hour was late, the moderator lamp burnt feebly, and had twice resented my winding it up by angry grunts and choking snorts; the decanter of toast-and-water (I would call attention to the beverage I invariably indulge in of an evening) was empty. I was gloomy, sorrowful, and alone. I had, in a desperate fit of moodiness, at last resolved to see if there were any more toast in the cupboard, when the roll of carriage-wheels swiftly approaching my house, distracted me for a moment. I ran to the window; to my surprise, the carriage had stopped at my gate; and almost immediately afterwards a ring at the bell compelled me to descend to the hall, and open the front door. I naturally concluded that some mistake as to the address had occurred, when a gentleman of undeniable manner, and irreproachably dressed in evening costume, presented himself with a graceful bow, and said, tentatively:—

“I have the distinguished privilege of speaking to Mr. Sparkle de Witt, the famous dramatist?”

What could I answer to this flattering inquiry? I was obliged to murmur “Yes.”

“I am profoundly concerned to have thus disturbed you at an inconvenient hour,” pursued the stranger, “but I am the bearer of a note which could not possibly have been brought a minute sooner to you. It is from Mr. Mæcenæ Foster, Manager of the Utopian Theatre. He only arrived from Ayr by

this night's mail, and desired me to present it at once!"

I bowed at the name of "manager"; but my face, no doubt, betrayed my perplexity.

"The name of Mr. Mæcenas Foster," smiled the stranger, "is probably unknown to you; but your talents are held in his highest esteem, and he is desirous (as his note will doubtless explain) of enlisting those talents into his service, if wholly convenient and agreeable to *yourself*. I will ask you to be so obliging as to read his note."

I hastily looked at the missive. The paper was like vellum; it emitted the odours of Arabia and Bond Street; its edges were golden, and dainty arabesques of deliciously-painted flowers embellished its margin. I dare not here repeat the charming phraseology of that epistle—its flattering appeal.

"I will be at Mr. Foster's service," I faltered, "at twelve o'clock to-morrow morning."

"You are goodness itself," replied the stranger. "I will convey the happy intelligence to Mr. Foster at once! Again accept my apologies for disturbing you! Good-night!"

"Will you not step in for a few—" I had begun, when the stranger, with a modest air, said:—

"Mr. Foster would regard it as a liberty on my part, as, indeed, it would be! I—I am only his valet! Good-night, sir! Mr. Foster's own brougham will be here at 11.45, to convey you to the theatre. Not a step, I pray!" and the stranger leapt into the pretty little *coupé*, and, in a moment, it and its flashing lamps were lost to sight.

I tottered upstairs. I re-wound the groaning moderator. I re-read that delightful note Mr. Foster had sent, and the roses

of Sharon had scented. *At last* I had a chance! Somebody believed in me, after all. Fame, glory, wealth, would be no longer visions. I had out the toast and made some toast-and-water. I again read the letter.

"Strange!" said I to myself. "*Very* strange! I thought I knew the name of every manager in the United Kingdom—but Mr. Mæcenas Foster? Evidently a wealthy and discriminative man. Dear me! Mæcenas Foster! Now, who the devil *is* Mæcenas Foster?"

No sooner had I uttered these words, than the lamp expired suddenly, and I heard a gust of wind pass by the casement with a low roar, as from an evil spirit striving to enter and seize a soul within, but baffled by a praying saint. I shuddered; and hastily finding the matches, lighted a candle, and retired precipitately to bed.

Any record of my nocturnal sentiments would be digressive. I omit them altogether.

* * * * *

Punctually at a quarter to twelve (I had been up since seven a.m., sleeplessly anxious), the most perfectly appointed brougham I ever saw pulled up at my door. I instantly descended the steps and made for it; a dapper little tiger, in blue and silver livery, had the brougham door open in a "jiffey." I entered; there was a speck of dust on my left boot; the tiger swept it off with a cambric handkerchief, and, touching his hat to me, closed the door.

In a moment we were off. If the exterior of the carriage were charming, what can be said of the appointments of its inner self? I am afraid of being episodic, and will not comment; but from the daily papers, printed on rich satin, to the self-lighting

cigars (I never smoked such), all was luxuriously perfect. There was a review of Tomkins's piece at the Olympic, which absorbed me for a few minutes, for it was the chronicle of a failure, and in those few minutes I lost the exact route we were following. Suddenly the brougham stopped at a palatial residence, adjoining the grandest theatre I ever looked upon. Odd to say I had no recollection of having seen either house or theatre before that moment; but, really, they build so quickly now-a-days, that the marvels of Aladdin's palace cease to be regarded as anything more than a smartly carried out contract.

The tiger had the brougham door open in a moment. I descended, and was met on the threshold of the noble residence by—no! not by a powdered footman—by Mr. Mæcenas Foster himself—self-introduced! I have had some extended experience of managers, and I cannot forget this incident.

"My dear sir!" purred Mr. Foster; "this is indeed good of you! To take all this trouble to oblige me. But, I trust, you will not have occasion to regret your condescension. Pray let me assist you! Cyril! Beaumont! Anstruther! Pray attend to Mr. De Witt."

I was in a perfect whirl of confusion, as a cohort of silent, stealthy valets (amongst whom I recognized my strange visitor of the previous night, but obtained no recognition from him), relieved me of hat, stick, and gloves, and then disappeared, whilst Mr. Foster ushered me, with a thousand charming welcomes, into his "little sanctum."

I have mixed in society at once aristocratic and artistic. I have enjoyed the hospitality of *virtuosi*, and am not unacquainted with the lavishly-appointed boudoirs of some of our most popular actresses; but all these

experiences paled and faded, as I contemplated the tasteful glories of Mr. Foster's "sanctum." Everything that art, prompted by consummate refinement, and stimulated by boundless riches, could accomplish, was present in that fairylike apartment. I presume that bewilderment was strongly marked in my hasty glances from one article of *vertu* to another—from the marvellous parquetry of the floor, to the *chefs d'œuvre* of Meissonier, Greuze, Reynolds, and De Neuville, which adorned the walls, where priceless tapestry did not glow. No doubt I looked confused and abashed, for Mr. Foster, with a smile, said, pleasantly:—

"I see you approve of my little den. It is my fancy to have my own chamber respectably appointed, and fit for the inspection of any one who may, as in your case, honour me by a visit."

I could only stammer out a few rapturous words.

"Before I trouble you," proceeded Mr. Mæcenas Foster, "with the dry details of business, I must offer you some slight refreshment," and, ignoring my feeble opposition, the manager pressed a golden button in the wall, and a silvery bell was heard to tinkle below; almost simultaneously, a low strain of sweet music stole into the quiet room, and a small table of ivory and gold, embossed with jewels, rose like an exhalation from some under-floor. The table was laid with exquisite dainties, and was surmounted by the very Parnassus of *épergnes*, loaded with the choicest flowers.

I uttered a cry of delight.

"My chief machinist, and stage-engineer, is an ingenious fellow," explained Mr. Foster, with a laugh. "This is his device. It saves trouble, you see. He was—is still, for all I know—Professor at Leyden. Allow

me!" and he busied himself in the vocation of host.

I *never* tasted such champagne.

"And now, most revered sir," said Mr. Foster, "I will briefly explain why I have taken the liberty of asking you here. I want you—if entirely agreeable to yourself, of course—to honour me, and assist me, by writing a comedy for my theatre."

I answered with becoming modesty, that I "would do my best."

"That is all I should expect, my dear sir," responded the manager. "*Your* best will always be good enough for me. Here is a list of my present company; but, pray, do not let *that* be an absolute guide. Cut out whom you please, engage whom you prefer."

I glanced at the company; it comprehended every great name in the theatrical world. "It will be no light task to fit such a distinguished company as this," I faltered. "Why, Irving, alone, would——."

"My dear sir," returned Mr. Foster, "you will experience none of the ordinary difficulties in my theatre. Mr. Irving is my salaried servant, he will do just as *you* think proper, from carrying on a salver in silence, to—well, any speaking part."

"Speaking part?" I stammered out.

"The same rule applies to all connected with, and engaged at, my establishment," replied Mr. Foster, coolly helping me again to the nectar from the gold-crested flagons. "I permit no class distinctions, or stage rivalries *here*. When you have "cast" your play, you will find the ladies and gentlemen selected perfectly ready, and ever anxious to do all in their power towards the advancement of the part with which they are respectively entrusted."

"This is all very wonderful," I could not

help remarking, as I stared at the formidable list. "When should you require the comedy?"

"I desire to consult *your* convenience entirely, Mr. De Witt," courteously returned Mr. Foster.

"You have no *immediate* necessity for——?"

"Not in the least," laughed the manager. "It is purely a question of art with me. This evening, will, I think, chronicle the two thousandth night of my present comedy; and, of course, my people may begin to wish for a change in the bill; but I have always a second (not a second-class) company at hand. They are, at present, travelling in Switzerland, I fancy."

I stared aghast. "Would this day month——?"

"Admirably!" responded Mr. Foster. "Mrs. Kendal, Ellen Terry, Irving, Hare, and—let me see!—oh! yes! some of our little people, will be returning. I can promise you Toole, Neville, James, Thorne, and Righton; and I've got Byron for certain!"

I gasped. I—*I*! had to write a comedy—and make jokes for H. J. Byron to speak!"

"And now to come to the more practical matter," recommenced Mr. Mæcenas Foster, cheerfully—"the terms!"

I tried to smile, but I meant to ask a good price; the work and the stake were important.

"Perhaps," proceeded Mr. Foster, "I had better at once explain that in my theatre I adopt the (I think, just) system of permitting the author to participate in the success of his work, without nailing him down to a term of nights, or other restriction. Of course, I am prepared, and only too pleased, to pay a sum of money down for the actual literary first-fruits; and such and such a

further sum per representation. I usually pay a thousand guineas down ; in *your* case, of course, Mr. De Witt, I must increase this—subject, naturally, to your acceptance or rejection of the terms—to fifteen hundred. Will that preliminary sum suit you ? If not——”

I murmured that I was quite satisfied.

“Capital !” said the manager. “Now as to the nightly remuneration. I suppose twenty guineas, and a half share of all receipts, would be fair ?”

I replied that nothing could be fairer ; I was mentally alluding to my prospects.

“There is the agreement, then !” smiled Mr. Foster, pushing a paper to me ; “and there is the cheque !”

I can’t remember which I took first.

“This day month, then ?” I got out at last.

“This day month, *if convenient !*” said Mr. Foster ; “but in all things, consider *your* convenience.” He pressed another gold knob.

My late visitor appeared from behind the tapestry.

“The carriage for Mr. De Witt !”

In another minute I was being whirled to my chambers.

How squalid they seemed ! Never mind, I was going to be famous at last ; somebody had found out that a dramatic author was absolutely a human creature, who had feeling ; sympathies, good intentions, and—ay, intelligence.

* * * * *

The month passed only too rapidly. How I did slave at that comedy ! The part for Nelly Farren worried me so, that I tore up half-a-dozen pages before I could get a start ; then Edward Terry and Hermann Vezin bothered me : it was a trial to have

only a gardener’s part, consisting of four lines, to give to the former, and less than “a length” to the latter. Mrs. Stirling was a “speechless” nonentity, and Lionel Brough and Miss Lydia Thompson had really nothing to say or do : the latter was only a guest in a ball-room scene. Then Toole would certainly kick at playing a comic footman, who appeared in only one scene (Act Third), and how to combine the great and opposite talents of George Honey, Mrs. and Mr. Bancroft, Shiel Barry, Miss Adelaide Neilson, Charles Wyndham, and G. W. Anson was a puzzle not easily to be solved. It could not be urged that I suffered from lack of “talent ;” on the contrary, the *embarras de richesses* was positively overwhelming ; and though I had been promised total immunity from any professional objections on the part of the company, I naturally felt highly nervous and diffident.

The comedy was ultimately finished, and the date fixed for me to read it to the ladies and gentlemen concerned in its representation. I was trembling with apprehension when the hour and Mr. Foster’s brougham arrived. The ordeal had to be passed anyhow, so I strung up my failing courage, and announced that I was ready ; but I presumed, as twelve o’clock had only that moment struck, a little margin of time was to be permitted to the company.

“Margin ! My dear sir,” laughed the manager, “you do not know the Utopian regulations yet ! Follow me. No one is ever late *here*.”

We passed down the lonely corridor, and Mr. Foster opened a side door. I was in the greenroom. Imagine a spacious and lofty apartment, half drawing-room, half conservatory, with every luxury in the way of couches, fauteuils, ottomans, etc., panelled with rich

mirrors, and hung with satin of the most delicate olive tint. The odour of adjacent flowers floated on the atmosphere, and the plashing of the tiny scent-fountains lent a dreamy influence of repose. Such was the greenroom of the "Utopian." But if the apartment was magnificent, the assembled company was even more brilliant. As I shall give the ever-memorable "cast" of my comedy in its proper place, I need not specially refer here to the array of genius before me. I may casually, however, mention that one face which I had *not* expected to meet, as belonging to a distinguished gentleman for whom I had not provided in the comedy, met mine with a pleasant and frank smile. It was the beaming countenance of Mr. Barry Sullivan. I hastily whispered to Mr. Foster.

"It's all right, my dear sir," returned that amazing man. "I told him to be handy in case you had need of him for any little chance part."

How shall I describe my reading of the comedy? How widely different was its reception by this noble company from what I had expected! How splendidly they took every point! How appreciatively they sighed

or smiled, as the subject demanded! How they laughed at the witticisms (Byron was specially delighted)! And how, when I concluded, the whole of the distinguished assembly rose to their feet and tumultuously applauded! It was embarrassing, it was affecting.

"Splendid! superb! brilliant! a masterpiece of construction and dialogue!" Such were the charming comments, such the overpoweringly-flattering verdict of the artists. Mr. Barry Sullivan, with a glowing smile, seized my hand and said—

"You must not omit me from *some* participation in this grand work! I implore you to let me appear as one of your guests! only as one of the guests in the last scene!"

I stammered out that I would try to "write in something."

"What?" said the lofty tragedian; "and probably mar the exquisite harmony of such a work! Never! I will—*may* I?—be a guest."

Of course I yielded.

The following was the inimitable disposition of the characters in my comedy. Such were the names that shed lustre upon my dramatic work:—

GLORY!

AN ORIGINAL COMEDY, IN THREE ACTS.

By SPARKLE DE WITT.

Characters.

LORD BRABAZON	MR. S. BANCROFT.
SIR MUNGO M'BEAN (with a Song and Fling)	MR. HENRY IRVING.
PHELIM (his Irish valet)	MR. DION BOUCICAULT.
BARNEY (Phelim's brother)	MR. SHIEL BARRY.
TAPES (a lawyer's clerk)	MR. HERMANN VEZIN.
BILLINGS (a gardener)	MR. EDWARD TERRY.
PODDLE (a livery stableman)	MR. H. J. BYRON.

MAJOR FLUKER	} (Friends of Lord Brabazon)	{	MR. GEORGE HONEY.
SIR EPHRAIM POTT			MR. DAVID JAMES.
CAPTAIN BUNGAY			MR. THOMAS THORNE.
TWINKLE (a Footman)			MR. J. L. TOOLE.
MASHAM (a Broker)	.	.	MR. JOHN HARE.
POLICEMAN	.	.	MR. E. A. SOTHERN.

(Guests at Lord Brabazon's by Messrs. H. Neville, W. H. Kendal, Charles Wyndham, Lionel Brough, E. Righton, Charles Warner, and Barry Sullivan.)

LADY BRABAZON	.	.	.	.	.	MRS. BANCROFT.
LADY M'BEAN	.	.	.	.	.	MRS. STIRLING.
EDITH M'BEAN (her Daughter)	.	.	.	.	.	MISS NEILSON.
FLORENCE (her Maid, with a Song)	.	.	.	.	.	MISS GENEVIEVE WARD.
MARKHAM (a Milliner)	.	.	.	.	.	MISS ELLEN TERRY.
POPSY (a Waif)	.	.	.	.	.	MISS NELLY FARREN.
THE MATRON OF ST. JAMES'S HOUSE	.	.	.	.	.	MRS. KENDAL.

(Visitors, Dressmakers, etc., by Mdles. Fanny Josephs, Sophy Larkin, Amy Roselle, Nelly Bromley, Lydia Thompson, and Adelina Patti.)

STAGE MANAGER	.	.	.	.	.	MR. HOWE.
ACTING MANAGER	.	.	.	.	.	MR. JOHN RYDER.
PROMPTER	.	.	.	.	.	MR. B. WEBSTER.
MANAGER OF THE REFRESHMENT SALOON	.	.	.	.	.	MR. W. FARRON.
SCENIC ARTIST	.	.	.	.	.	MR. J. E. MILLAIS.
MUSICAL DIRECTOR	.	.	.	.	.	MR. ARTHUR SULLIVAN
GAS ENGINEER AND LIMELIGHT MAN	.	.	.	.	.	MR. EDISON.

After a delightful chat, and a sumptuous luncheon, I left the "Utopian." It had been a day of trial, but it had also been a day of triumph.

The rehearsals were artistic treats. At the *very first* we had the entire scenery, the full band, and every "property," and each artist in the comedy was letter-perfect.

I felt that I had done some injustice to Mr. Neville, and gave him an opening speech when the guests entered. The good fellow, with tears in his eyes, urged that Mr. Barry Sullivan should have it. *He* passed it on. Such was the sublimity of true rivalry. I had had no such experience before, and was consequently affected. It was ultimately

spoken by Mr. Creswick, a late addition to the guests.

With the ladies it was just the same. Miss Lydia Thompson gave up her dance to Miss Nelly Farren, and Miss Farren gave up her song to Mrs. Kendal. It was the prettiest contest I ever witnessed. Was it to be wondered at that, aided by such talent, and backed by such perfect management, the comedy was ready for production in less than a week! The advertisements were novel, elegant, and superabundant. Not a detail which could tend to success was omitted. We should easily begin and end with "Glory," as Byron wittily said. He and Toole were the life of the piece; full of

fun, but splendidly disdaining the embroidery of "gag."

At length the night of production arrived. All the Royal Family and Household, the Archbishops of Canterbury and York, the Prelates of London, Durham, etc., the Houses of Lords and Commons, and the entire Bench of Judges were present. It was a noble, and a thrilling sight.

* * * * *

The curtain rose.

* * * * *

The curtain finally fell, amidst vociferous applause.

The comedy, the artists, the scenery, the music, the gas-fittings, and the author

were all a success. In a whirl of excitement I was pushed before the satin curtain by Mr. Mæcenas Foster, to receive the deafening approbation of artistic and critical London.

I remember no more !

* * * * *

I have been told that all I have attempted to describe here is an hallucination—that no such theatre ever existed, and that such a management is, and always will be, impracticable in this country.

I only reiterate my statements. Toast-and-water does not produce nightmare. I may have mislaid (I suppose I *did*), that preliminary cheque, but I know I never cashed it.

BENEFITS.

BY LIONEL BROUGH.



NO one but an actor who has gone through the provincial "mill," and has regularly "served his time," can possibly have any idea of what a benefit, and the art of benefit making really means.

A London actor who appears in a piece, which runs for many hundreds of nights, and perhaps only plays two parts in as many years, takes his annual benefit as a matter of

course, pockets the receipts, and waits until his "date" comes round again to repeat the "dose." This is all very easy in London, and in the present state of theatrical "runs;" but, twenty years ago, more particularly in the provinces, this could not have happened. In those days, a run of *thirty* nights was a thing to be talked about. How then were benefits made? I will endeavour to explain. When a stock country actor signed his engagement for a year, or a season (which then meant about nine months) he expected benefit terms—which were usually a clear half, or third of the receipts—or perhaps to share after the ordinary expenses. His first move was then to get as near the date as he possibly could, and then get to work. Perhaps he would have seven or eight months to "make" his benefit.

From this moment benefit "making" was his fixed idea, and this was never lost sight of, for to him it was of vast importance, meaning new clothes for his business, something for out-door wear, a new wig or two, fresh tights, perhaps a pet sword, which had met his admiring gaze in a second-hand shop—the clearing up of the few odd debts necessarily incurred—and (if a married man) a week or two out of town for his wife and children; and last, but not least, the means of keeping him free from debt, whilst out of an engagement. These items, which may seem small now, were all-important at the time I speak of, for there were actors of position (and none but such ever had benefits), who rarely, if ever, received a salary upon which they could do more than live respectably and pay their way. I repeat, how, then, was this all-important benefit to be made? Often by considerable sacrifices of dignity, much hard work, and a settled determination that the benefit had "to be made."

All through the engagement the actor was compelled to work his hardest, so as to make himself popular with the general public; next his chance customers—people who hardly know him off the stage, must be allowed to pat him on the back and call him by his Christian name, and be generally familiar, but he must take no offence; next, he must never refuse an invitation, no matter how inconvenient it may be to him to accept; when in society he must make himself as agreeable as he possibly can; he must deal with as many tradesmen as he possibly can, taking care to offend none of the old ones, and yet making friends with the new; he must never receive a letter, the address of which is not put down in his note-book for a circular to be sent at the proper time; next, he must

play at as many benefits as he possibly can, so as to get a constituency from the other theatres; in fact, he must leave nothing undone to make himself as popular as possible both in and out of the theatre.

The results of this spell of hard labour are as varied as the means by which they are obtained. Sometimes the weather is fine, there are numerous out-door attractions, or, the manager "puts up his name" when there is some great attraction at a rival house, or (if in a manufacturing district) one of those unforeseen serious depressions in trade occur, and the results are "nil," or worse, a decided loss, so that after all the anxiety, labour, self-sacrifice, and expense he is left with nothing, and sometimes a considerable debt. This, of course, is only one side of the story, and perhaps rather an exceptional one; for, on the other hand, many popular country actors can depend upon an addition of nearly a hundred pounds a year to their incomes by the profit of their benefits.

The smaller "fry" of the profession often arrange with their managers for a benefit in the form of a "ticket night;" by this arrangement (which entirely secures them from loss) they are entitled to one half of the money obtained by the sale of tickets sold by their own exertions, and printed at their own expense. Of these "ticket nights," and also of "benefits," there are many stories well known to most members of the profession, but, as they may be new to the outer world, I will retail one or two of them.

In Liverpool, some few years ago, we had a very popular clown (now, alas! gone over to the majority), one "Ben" M'Cormack, "a fellow of infinite jest." On the occasion of his benefit, he asked Mr. S. M. Harrison, a well-known local author, to write a speech

for him. The speech began with "Motley is my only wear," etc., etc., and through the speech the word "motley" occurred very often. After the benefit, "Ben" was asked by the author how the speech went. "First rate, Mr. Harrison," said Ben; "they liked it very much, but there was a deuce of a lot about Mr. Motley in it, but not a word about poor Ben M'Cormack."

This is not a bad story about a ticket-night benefit.

A very impecunious member of a company in Dublin was about to have a "ticket" night (one half of all the tickets he sold to be his share). Hearing that there was to be a great billiard match between two well-known members of Trinity College, our friend thought this might prove a good chance for the sale of a few tickets. Wrapped in an old piece of newspaper, he had twelve dress circle, five upper boxes, ten pit, and about twenty gallery—the remaining stock of tickets he had had printed, and which he had not been able to sell, or even leave upon sale or return. Waiting patiently until the conclusion of the match, he rushed up to the victor, and after sundry congratulations, mentioned "that his benefit came off on Thursday," and that he "thought Mr. — might like a ticket or two." "What tickets have you?" asked the elated Irishman. "How many would you require?" said the actor. "Give me the lot," said the student; "how much are they?" "The whole lot!" inquired our friend: "why, they come to four pounds eight shillings!" "Here, then," said the victor, throwing down a five-pound note, "that'll make us square. I can't come, so I'll put 'em on the fire," doing so as he spoke. The actor gave a yell, and rushed to try and save them, but too late, and sitting down with a look of despair on his face, he said, "Good gracious,

sir! do you know what you've done? Why, I haven't paid for the *printing* of them yet!" He could not at the time realize that the entire five-pound note was his, minus the cost of printing—about one shilling.

Another, and perhaps better, story of burning benefit tickets, is told of a low comedian, who was very popular in one of the midland towns. At the time I speak of, the company only played three times a week. On the "off" nights some of them spent their time at a "free and easy" at the principal hotel, and sang and recited, and generally tried to make themselves popular. Our friend the low comedian was an especial favourite with the frequenters, and when his benefit was about to take place, he was asked to bring some tickets.

The Chairman for the evening then opened a list, and soon a goodly number of tickets were sold. The Chairman then rose and said, "Gentlemen, I believe Mr. —, whom we all so much admire, is bound to have a crowded house, therefore I propose that we (who have all taken tickets) should let him have the entire benefit of our small assistance—instead of letting the manager have half—I therefore propose that we one and all put the tickets on the fire." Upon which, amidst loud applause, he said, "There goes my ten shillings' worth." "There goes my five," said another; and so it went round the entire room.

"Gentlemen," said the low comedian, in a voice broken with emotion, "I hardly know how to thank you, but—I will *not* be outdone in generosity. You have destroyed seven pound ten's worth of my tickets. I will do the same." Upon which he counted out a packet of shilling tickets (only worth the paste-board and printing) and throwing them on the fire—left the room amidst loud applause.

But listen to this about a poor old clown.

A clown, for sake of his popularity and as an advertisement) is *bound* to take a benefit—in fact, it is always in his engagement. One poor fellow I met looked particularly radiant after his benefit. I asked him if I might congratulate him on the result of his benefit. He said, “You may, laddie; it’s the best I’ve had for four years. *I only lost twenty-seven shillings.*”

And now one more to finish.

Actors always like playing a part *out of*

their usual line of business upon their benefits, therefore you often find a “heavy man” playing “light comedy” upon that especial occasion, and *vice versa*. Upon one occasion two men who played in Dog Pieces determined to change parts for this night only. But it ended in disaster—for whenever the “good young man” of the piece came on the dog flew at his throat, and when the villain was in the act of committing some dreadful crime the dog would insist upon licking his hand, and playfully wagging his tail.

OUR DOUBLES.

BY S. B. BANCROFT.



THEN you never were in Rome, Mr. Bancroft?”

“Never. You seem surprised, Lady A—Why?”

“I’ll tell you after luncheon,” replied my hostess.

This conversation occurred, I remember, one day last May, just before the end of the revival of “Caste.”

A little later I was in the drawing-room, turning over an album of photographs, when I came to an excellent likeness of Mrs. C——, the eldest daughter of the mistress of

the house. I asked where she was. My hostess said :

“In Rome, with her husband; and this letter, which I received from her last week, will tell you why I was surprised at your saying you had never been there, for I certainly thought ‘Captain Hawtree’ and ‘Polly Eccles’ had been taking a holiday. Read what Emily says on the last page.”

As she spoke, Lady A—— handed me a letter, which she had taken from a writing-table, and I read this paragraph :

“By-the-bye, mother dear, do find out how we have offended the Bancrofts. We met them face to face the day before yesterday in the Piazza del Popolo, and they cut us dead—a ceremony which was most effectually repeated last night at the theatre. Jack is quite hurt about it, and so am I.”

For a moment I was bewildered, then a light suddenly broke in upon me.

“My dear Lady A——,” I said, “this is

more than vexing ; pray tell Mr. and Mrs. C—— at once that neither Mrs. Bancroft nor myself have ever been in Rome, that we have acted every night since January, and that they must have seen *our doubles*."

"Your doubles!"

"Our doubles. Yes; there is an unexplained mystery here; and I am so perplexed with an indescribable doubt that I must tell you a little story—though that is hardly the word, for it is only the beginning of one. Who can tell how it will end?"

* * * *

"In the autumn of 1874, we had recommenced work at the little theatre, after a holiday abroad, when one day I received a letter from a debt-collector living in Camden Town, stating that he was instructed by Mr. —, the proprietor of the — Hotel, and also of some livery stables, at Ventnor, to apply to me for immediate payment of an account for the hire of carriages and horses in the previous September, while staying at the said hotel, and left unpaid when I went away. Having passed the whole of my holiday in Switzerland and Venice, and never having been in Ventnor in my life, I was a little puzzled by this application; at first, I thought it must be a practical joke, but eventually I answered the letter—rather angrily, I think—pointing out the mistake which had been made, and stating my real whereabouts at the time I was charged with driving about the Isle of Wight.

"From the debt-collector I heard no more. But one evening a few weeks later, when I had arrived at the theatre, and was reading some letters before dressing for the stage, the hall-porter knocked at the door of my room, said that a gentleman wanted to see me, and handed me a card.

"You may guess my surprise when I read

that my visitor was the proprietor of the — Hotel, Ventnor. I at once told the hall-keeper to show him into the green-room, which, so early in the evening, was unoccupied, and in a few minutes I went downstairs.

"Good evening."

"Good evening, sir."

"You have asked to see me. I am Mr. Bancroft."

"So I see, sir," said 'mine host' cheerfully, and with a decidedly provincial accent.

"I looked at him well—his face was frank and honest, and his manner self-possessed.

"You have applied to me," I next said, "for money you say I owe you?"

"Yes, sir; the amount remained unpaid when you left my hotel in September."

"When I left your hotel! Do you mean to assert that my appearance has not at once convinced you there must be some mistake?"

"Not on my side, I think, sir."

"Do you mean to say," I still asked—fairly amazed—"that you believe you recognize in me the person who owes you this money?"

"I see no difference," was the immediate reply, 'except that he had a moustache.'

"At this time, and throughout my holiday, my face was clean-shaven, for I was acting the part of 'Joseph Surface.'

"Tell me something more of this," I said; 'for your manner, at any rate, convinces me of your honesty.'

"I thank you, sir," replied my visitor, 'and, but for your straightforward denial, I would have sworn in any witness-box that you were the person who, with a lady, passed at my house for nearly a month as Mr. and Mrs. Bancroft, of the Prince of Wales' Theatre.'

"Here, I thought, was my chance of convincing the man he had been imposed upon. I turned up the gas, directly under a large

photograph of my wife, and said, 'That is a portrait of Mrs. Bancroft.'

"My visitor rose, looked at it well, then said, 'Yes, and a very good likeness, too!'

"I was nearly paralyzed with amazement, and hardly remember what passed next, but I feel certain that the landlord—although his eyesight was throughout the interview my enemy—became as impressed by the honesty of my repudiation as I was by the frankness of his assertions.

"I learnt that our doubles had lived for a month on the best his house afforded; that at the end of their stay there was a little difficulty about the bill—they said they could not pay then, but would send the money from London, as the theatre was about to re-open (a statement which agreed with the newspaper advertisements), and that they must go.

"To this proposal 'mine host' naturally objected. Eventually, the man was allowed to depart alone, leaving the lady with her luggage to be redeemed. The money for the hotel bill, it seems, was sent in a few days, and the hostage released, the claim sent in to me being for carriage and horse hire which had been overlooked at the time, the livery-stable business being separate from that of the hotel.

"When at last my visitor went away he left, I feel assured, full of conflicting emotions, hardly knowing which of his senses he best could trust."

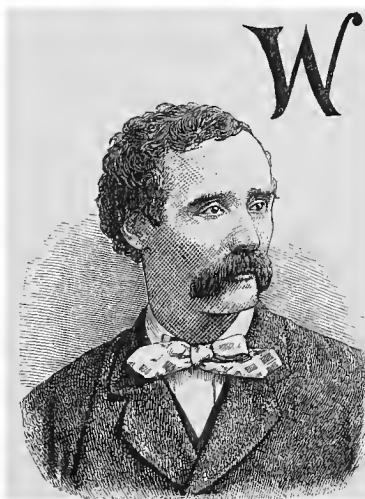
* * * *

"My dear Mr. Bancroft," said my listener, when I had finished, "I wish there had been a shorthand writer in the room, for I shall never be able to tell all this to Emily when I try to explain that she only saw your ghosts. How extraordinary! Not merely a striking resemblance to *one* of you—but to *both*! I wonder if these people are still in Rome! What did you do?"

"Nothing. At first I resolved upon a warning advertisement to hotel-keepers in the *Times*, but thought afterwards that I would wait patiently until I heard of our doubles again. Until to-day not a word of them has reached me for more than four years. What other mischief has been done, I cannot say; at the least, you see that my credit has been tarnished, and the friendship of your daughter and her husband imperilled. Should any sequel happen, I promise you shall know it—whether I am sent for some day to a gaol to receive a penitent confession—whether *we* ever receive a legacy intended for *them*. Till then this little episode in but one way resembles an important story, it can only be "*concluded in our next.*"

THE WAIL OF A BANNER-BEARER.

BY ARTHUR MATTHISON.



WELL, what if I am only a banner-bearer? There's bigger blokes than me what begun as "supes," a n' see where they've got to? *Why don't I get there?* Cause I ain't never

had the chance. You just let me get a

"speaking part," as soots me, that's all. Oh—it "*would be all*," eh? Why—but there! you're a baby in the purfession! you are! When you've been Captin' of the Guard, and Third Noble, and a Bandit Keerousin, and First Hancient Bard, and fourth in the Council of Ten, what listens to Otheller, and the Mob in the Capital, and a Harcher of Merry England, and a Peer of France, what doesn't speak, but has to look as if he could say a lot; when you've been all this, you may talk! *I needn't be offended?* All right, old pal; I ain't. Though I was 'urt when that utlerty cove said as I was only a banner-bearer. "Only!" Why I should like to know where they'd be without us—all them old spoutin' tragedy merchants! They'd have no armies, consequently they couldn't rave at 'em, and lead 'em on to victory and things. They wouldn't 'ave no sennits, so they'd 'ave to cut out their potent, grave, and reverent seniors—an' that 'ud worry 'em. They wouldn't 'ave no hexcited citizens, and so they couldn't bury old Ceser nor praise him neither. They couldn't strew no fields with no dead soldiers. They'd 'ave nobody to chivy 'em when they come to the throne, or return'd from the wars. They couldn't 'ave no percessions; as for balls, and parties, and tornemongs, why, they couldn't give 'em. And where 'ud they often be without the "distant ollerings" behind the scenes, allus a-comin' nerer and louder. Why, I remember a 'eavy lead one night, as had insulted his army fearful, at rehersal; he stops sudden, and thumps his brestplate, and says, "'Ark, that toomult," when there warnt no more toomult than two flies 'ud make in a milk-jug. We jest cut off his toomult, and quered his pitch in a minnit, for the laugh come in 'ot. We're just as much wanted as they are, make no error."

Only a banner-bearer! "Only," be blow'd. Oh, don't you bother, I ain't getting waxy. I'm only a standin' up for my purfession. What do you say? *They could do without me in the modden drarmer?* The modden drarmer, my boy, ain't actin'! It's nothing but "cuff-shootin'." You just has to stand against a mankel-shelf, with your hands in Poole's pockets, and say nothing, elergantly. You don't want no chest-notes; you don't want no action; you don't want no exsitement; you don't want no lungs, no heart, and no brain; only lungs an' soda, heart an' potash, brain an' selzer. Every-thing's dilooted, my boy, for the modden drarmer; and the old school, an' the old costumes 'ud bust the sides and roof too of the swell bandboxes, where they does the new school and the new kostumes. *P'raps I'm right?* Of course I'm right; and I'm in earnest, too! Why, my boy, if they was to offer me an engagement as a "guest," in one of them cuff-shootin' plays, and ask me to go on in evening dress, I'm blest if I wouldn't "throw up the part." Trousers and wite ties cramp me. I wants a suit o' mail an' a 'alberd; a toonic, and my legs free; a dagger in my teeth—not a toothpick; a battle-axe in my 'and—not a crutch. I likes to be led to victory, I does. I likes to storm castles, and trampel on the foe! I does. I likes to hang our banners on the outward walls, I does. I'm a born banner-bearer, I am, and I glories in it. No, my boy! none of your milk-and-water "guests" and such, for the likes of me! An' if I was the Lord Chambermaid, I'd perhibit the modden drarmer altogether. Them's my sentiments. If he don't perhibit it, actin' ull soon be modden'd out of existence; an' we shall 'ave Macbeth in a two guinea tourist suit, and Looy the Eleventh in nickerbockers,

on a bisykel. It's the old banner-bearing school as got us all our big actors, an' it stands to reason, my boy; for a cove *can't* spred hisself in a frock coat and droring-room langwidge. They're both on 'em too tame for what I calls real actin'. What! you *have heard say as us banner-bearers don't act—was only machines?* Well, some on us don't, p'r'aps, but some on us does, and no mistake.

You can't, as a rule, expect much feeling, much dignerty, much patriertism, or much simperthy for a shillin' a night. If they was all the real articles, they'd fetch a lot more than that; but there is gentlemen in my line as goes in for all four—reg'lar comes nateral to 'em. Why, I've been that work'd on when I've seen Joan o' Hark goin' in a perisher at the stake, an' makin' that last dyin' speech and confession of hers, that I've felt a real 'art beat against my property brest-plate, and felt real tears a tricklin' down to my false beard. I've been so struck with admirashun for some Othellos, that when they've been a addressin' of me as the sen-nit, I've felt as dignerfied as if I'd been the Doag of Venice hisself, and I bet I look'd it.

As for patriertism, there isn't a man living as has died for his country—willing, mind you—so often as I have; and I've strewed many a bloody field of batel with a ernest corpse, I have. An' as far as regards simperthy, it's stood in my way, for I've been that upset by Queen Katherines and Prince Arthurs, and even old Shylock (for Grashyano does giv 'im a doin'), and Ophelias, and other sufferin' parties, as I've often forgot my hexits and been fined a tanner; and if that ain't actin', I should like to know what is.

It's all very well for them noospaper crickets to harry us, and say as we're a set o' this and a set o' the other, and that we ain't

got no hideas. They wouldn't have many hideas, if they wasn't paid more than a shilling a night (with often twopence off to the hagent) for the use of 'em: the article's as good as the price, an' no mistake. Some on us gets a bit more, and accordin' some on us gives a bit more; for there's first heavy lead, and setterer, among the supes, just as there is among the princerples, don't make no error! *Have to do as the "stars" tell us?* Well, of course we does, only if the stars don't treat us like gents, we knows how to queer their pitches: rather! Why, it ain't so very long since as I was a-playin' a Roman Licktor in "Virginus," and when we was a rehersin' of it, 'im as play'd Happyus Clordyus called me a "pig." "All right," says I, "aside" like, "I'll 'pig' yer." Accordin', when night come, and he makes a exit in the third act, and says—didn't he enjoy hisself with it—"And I shall surely see that they reseve it!" he chucks his toger over his right shoulder, and turns round as magestick as a beedle to walk off—well, some'ow, just then I drops my bundle of sticks ("fusses," they calls 'em), all accidentle like, and Happyus Clordyus, with his heyes in the hair, comes to grief, slap over 'em. He was the un-happiest Clordyus all through that play as ever you see. What did he call me a "pig" for, the idiot?

"Seem to be important, after all?" Important! I should think we was! There couldn't be no big drarmers without us, no gallant warryers, no 'owling mobs, no "Down with the tirants!" no briggands reposin', no 'appy pezzants, and no stage pictures of any account, if it warn't for the supes and banner-bearers, as ought to be made more on and seen to a bit better than they is; for what says the old sheeny in the play, 'im what old Phellups us'd to warm 'em up in? "What?" says he, "what! Hath not a supe eyes,

'ands, horgans, somethin' else, and passions? fed with the same food?—(no! Shakey-old man, he ain't!) Well, if you prick us, don't us bleed? if we larf, don't you tickle us? and if you wrong us, ain't we goin' to take it out of you, like I took it out o' Happyus Clordyus?" *How I do mag?* Well, ain't it enough to make me? Don't let that 'ere utility cuff-shooter allood to me as "only a banner-bearer, then!" Let 'im, and all the others, treat us more respectful, and he and them too 'ull find a feeling 'art and good manners too, at even a shilling a night; though we could throw 'em in a lot more of both for an extra bob.—Good night, old man.

COMEDY AND TRAGEDY.*

By W. S. GILBERT.



IN 1745, Mdlle. Céline was "leading lady" at the Theatre Français. She was a very beautiful woman, twenty-five years old, and of irreproachable character, Mdlle. Cé-

line was only her stage name, inasmuch as she

was the wife of Philippe de Quillac, late a lieutenant in the Royal Body Guard, and now an actor of small parts in the theatre of which his wife was a distinguished ornament. De Quillac was a young man of good family, and of some small fortune. He honestly fell in love with Céline while he was still a lieutenant in the army, and honestly married her, and as a consequence of this social down-step (for actors and actresses were held as little better than outcasts in those days), he had to resign his commission. Having nothing better to do, he took to the stage, for which, it must be admitted, he had no special talent. Nevertheless, his own industry, backed by his wife's influence, obtained for him an engagement at the Français—a consummation which he had earnestly desired to bring about, in order that he might be constantly at his wife's side. In truth, she stood greatly in need of a protector, for the Duc de Richelieu had condescended to make two distinct attempts to carry her away, as she left the stage door.

Her personal beauty, which was considerable, would probably have been insufficient of itself to incite that distinguished blackguard to take such determined steps. But her reputation as a spotless woman was a standing insult to him, and he made up his mind to avenge it. He laid siege to her in the orthodox fashion of those clumsy times. He sent her flowers, with notes in them. He composed immetrical quatrains in her honour. He obtained access to her at rehearsals, and delivered monstrous compliments, puffed out with complicated allegory. He was so obliging as to invite her to supper on many occasions, and on one occasion he carried his condescension so far as to offer to sup with her. These delicate overtures were a source of incessant irritation,

* The author has taken steps to reserve to himself the right of dramatizing this story.

both to Céline and to her husband. De Quillac sent many challenges to the Duc de Richelieu, but they were treated with contempt. De Quillac was an actor, and it was impossible for a nobleman of Richelieu's rank to cross swords with him. Eventually Richelieu's attentions became more definite, and they finally culminated in two attempts to carry her off, as she was leaving the theatre after performance. These experiments were made, not by Richelieu himself, but by his servants, who, having no great interest at stake, allowed themselves to be readily defeated by De Quillac and other actors of the theatre.

These renewed insults, and the impossibility of bringing their instigator to account, rendered De Quillac's life intolerable, and at length he and his wife determined to lay such a snare for their distinguished enemy as would bring him fairly into De Quillac's power. To achieve this end, Céline gave out that as she found it impossible to get on with her husband, they had resolved to separate. She further explained that a life of respectability was rather a Quixotic end to aim at, and that she had resolved, thenceforward, to see a little more of the world, and to taste a little more freely of its pleasures; and to this sensible determination she was encouraged by the approval of many distinguished persons of both sexes, whose careers were so strictly in accordance with their proffered advice, that their good faith in giving it was placed beyond suspicion. The news quickly reached Richelieu's ears, and he, also, was pleased to compliment her, in an atrocious ode, on her extreme good sense. This was the more disinterested on his part, as his appetite for the chase was in direct ratio to the difficulty of the country, as he was candid enough to explain to her

in the last verse but one. That she might not, however, be unduly cast down by this information, he assured her, in the last verse, that he intended, despite the facilities that this new order of things seemed to promise, to renew his solicitations at an early opportunity. Céline intimated her determination to signalize her new method of life by a pleasant supper party, to which Richelieu, the Abbé Dubois, M. de la Ferté, and many other eminent debauchees of the Court of Louis XV., were invited.

The night of the supper arrived, and Céline received her guests in a *salon* on the ground floor of her hotel. She was, to all appearances, in admirable spirits, and received them with infinite good humour. Richelieu arrived last, and the frankness of her welcome, tempered as it was by a touch of profound respect for his exalted rank, seemed to him to be the very essence of good breeding. Supper was eventually announced, but at this stage Céline pleaded a headache, and on this plea contrived to remain behind. Richelieu, infinitely pained at the news, was so good as to offer to remain with her until she should feel well enough to rejoin her friends—an offer which Céline gratefully accepted.

Left alone with her, he, as a matter of course, condoled with her on her affliction, and suggested many remedies, which she pettishly rejected.

"Bah! Monsieur le Duc, are you so young a hand as not to understand that there are headaches for which a congenial *tête-à-tête* is the best remedy? These friends of yours—they worry me. They talk so much, and they do not talk well. I can listen to you, but not to them."

"I am infinitely flattered, Madame, at the compliment you are so good as to pay

me. I cannot doubt its good faith, for it is a conclusion that you have arrived at after some deliberation."

"You allude to the silence with which I have hitherto received your attention. You must remember that I was not a free agent. The acts of a woman who is embarrassed by the incessant presence of a jealous husband must not be judged too strictly. But there, he is gone, and I am to all intents a widow."

"You would have been a widow in very truth, long since, if I had found it possible to comply with his pressing invitations. But what could I do? Personally, I have the profoundest respect for his calling, but in my position I was helpless. Am I forgiven?"

And so saying, he took her hand affectionately in his.

"I did not desire his death, Monsieur, nor do I now. He has done for me all that was necessary; he has gone to Marseilles, and he has pledged his word that he will not return. Nay, Monsieur le Duc, be reasonable."

The Duke had placed his arm around her waist.

"You must make some allowance. I am hungry—here is a feast. Have I not said grace enough?"

"Nay, Monsieur, I cannot allow this. Remove your arm, I pray; your friends will be returning. If they should see us thus——"

"My friends will not return yet awhile, and when they do they will give us fair notice of their approach. Céline, I love you. Céline, I have waited long and patiently. Céline, I——"

At this point he looked over her shoulder, and saw, standing behind her, De Quillac, white and stern, with a drawn sword in his hand. The truth flashed upon Richelieu in a moment.

"This is a trap," said he.

"It is a trap," replied Céline.

"It is a trap," repeated De Quillac.

"For many months you have grossly insulted my wife, and, through my wife, myself. I have sent you challenge after challenge, but my messages were ignored by you. Inflamed beyond endurance at the many outrages you have dared to inflict upon us, we have devised this plan to get you into our power."

"And this is with your consent, Madame?"

"Entirely."

"What do you wish me to do?"

"Those doors lead to the garden. You must fight me there, to-night."

"And if I refuse?"

"I will kill you where you stand."

"But you are an actor, and, by your profession, proscribed. I cannot fight an actor."

"Monsieur, I have laboured long and wearily to attain the position which I have just achieved—that of a member of the Theatre Français. It has been the aim of my ambition, and that long-coveted reward has, within the last few days, been conferred on me. Here is my engagement, signed and sealed. By this act"—and here he tore the paper into two pieces—"I annul my engagement, and I pledge you my honour that under no circumstances will I ever appear on the stage again. Now, M. le Duc, I am no longer an actor, and you cannot refuse to meet me."

"Madame," said Richelieu, turning to Céline, "I have no desire to injure you or your husband. I have wronged you sufficiently, and I would willingly make amends. I implore you not to expose your husband to the danger he is courting."

Céline's lip quivered for a moment; it was for a moment only.

"Monsieur le Duc, you must fight my husband."

"Let me remind you," said the Duke, "that I am one of the most skilful swordsmen in France. Let me place distinctly before your eyes the fact that in going out with me your husband runs no risk, for he encounters a certainty. I implore you to use your influence to check him, if you have any regard for him, for if I cross swords with him, I assure you, on my honour, that I will kill him."

Céline was deadly pale, but her resolution did not desert her.

"Monsieur le Duc, you must fight my husband."

"Good. It shall be as you will. I make but one stipulation—that the fact that I have consented to meet an actor shall never be known to any but ourselves."

"You have my promise," said De Quillac.

"And mine," said Céline.

"Then, sir," said the Duke, "if you will be so good as to lead the way, I will do myself the honour to follow you."

De Quillac turned to his wife, and, taking her in his arms, kissed her fondly.

"I am ready, Monsieur," said he.

And the Duke and the actor went through the folding-doors into the garden.

At this point the full significance of the Duke's warning seemed to dawn upon her. The loss that she was, almost to a certainty, about to sustain—the knowledge that this great risk was undertaken on her behalf, with her consent, and almost at her instigation, destroyed the stern stuff of which the woman was made. She rushed to the door that had just closed.

"Philippe!—come back! for the love of Heaven, come back!"

It was too late, for, through another door came her guests, warmed with wine. With a supreme effort she assumed a thoughtless gaiety of carriage, and entered, almost recklessly, into the tone of *persiflage* which prevailed among those who had supped. She felt that it was impossible to be silent—she must say something, or do something incessantly, or her fortitude would assuredly break down.

"Come, Abbé, what shall we do? Have you nothing to propose? Shall we sing—dance—what shall we do? But be quick! I cannot bear delay. Suggest something, for Heaven's sake——"

Several suggestions were made. Each in turn was eagerly acquiesced in by Céline. At length some one recollected that Céline had a singular faculty for improvisation. Give her a suitable subject, and she would extemporize a poem upon it, in excellent rhymed Alexandrines. It was suggested that she should favour the company with an example of her remarkable facility in this respect.

"With pleasure—anything you please—give me a subject—quick! quick!—I cannot wait."

It was debated among the company whether the subject to be proposed should belong to the domain of comedy or of tragedy. Some were for one—some for the other. To Céline, it was a matter of indifference, so that the question was quickly settled. At length a gentleman present solved the difficulty by proposing that she should extemporize in comedy first, and in tragedy afterwards. Céline was ready—all that she waited for was a subject.

A comedy-subject was proposed. An unsuccessful lover had surreptitiously obtained access to his mistress's chamber in a woman's disguise.

It was enough. Céline, in the character of the lady, commenced her improvisation. She detected the imposture, and proceeded, in withering terms, to ridicule the contemptible device to which her suitor had resorted.

At this point, one of the guests—a Monsieur L'Estrange—exclaimed :

"Hush ! I pray your pardon for this interruption ; but I am certain I heard a sound of swords clashing in the garden."

"It is nothing, sir," said Céline. "My servants are amusing themselves. We are enjoying ourselves here—let them have their enjoyment also. It is nothing, I assure you."

She proceeded with the improvisation. She pointed out to her disguised lover how well a woman's garb befitted such a woman's soul as his, and recommended him to adhere to a costume which he carried with such address. Her manner was buoyant and defiant—perhaps a little too much so ; still everyone was delighted with the exhibition. At a critical point in the verse, L'Estrange, who had been listening at the garden-door, again interrupted her :

"Madame, I am bound to interrupt you again. The clashing of swords is distinctly audible. I am certain you cannot be aware of what is going on. You must permit me to examine the garden."

Céline rushed to the door, locked it, and withdrew the key.

"It is nothing, Monsieur, I assure you. You must not enter the garden. The fact is, that I am preparing a little surprise for you all, and if you go into the garden at this moment, you will destroy everything. Pray permit me to continue."

So saying, she gave the key of the door to the physician to the theatre, who happened to be among the guests, enjoining him,

at the same time, not to part with it on any consideration.

She attempted to resume her improvisation, but she found it difficult to take up the thread at the point at which it had been broken. It was, in truth, a struggle between comedy and tragedy, and tragedy had the best of it, for a loud exclamation, as from a man in acute pain, broke upon her ear, and her resolution gave way at once.

"Gentlemen, I cannot go on. It is useless to attempt to disguise my agitation from you. You must see that I am terribly overwrought. Gentlemen, for the love of Heaven, interfere to save my husband. He is in that garden, engaged in a duel with the Duc de Richelieu ! The shriek that we all heard was his—he is dying—perhaps dead ! For God's sake interfere to save him, if it be not too late !"

And so saying, she endeavoured, but vainly, to break open the door which she had so recently locked.

At first the guests were alarmed, till they recollected that the exhibition of comedy was to be succeeded by one of tragedy, and they concluded that this was but the fulfilment of the second half of her promise.

"Admirable ! What passion—what earnestness !" and a round of applause rang through the room.

"Gentlemen, pray do not mock me. I am not acting ; I am in earnest. My husband is dying, perhaps dead. For Heaven's love, help him while there is yet time !"

A murmur of admiration was the only reply that this appeal elicited. The spectators were as men spell-bound.

"Doctor, you have the key ; I gave it to you. I love him. He is in deadly peril. Give me the key, I say, give me the key, or I shall die !"

It was agreed by all present that Céline had surpassed herself—that is to say, by all but one.

“Gentlemen,” said the Doctor, “this lady is not acting; she is in earnest. See, her colour comes and goes.”

“Nonsense, Doctor! Madame is acting, and acting admirably. Strange that so old a hand as you should be deceived.”

“It would be strange indeed if I were deceived, but I am not. I take upon myself to believe that she is in mortal earnest, and in that belief I shall comply with her wish.”

Undeterred by the ridicule with which his resolve was received, he went to the door and unlocked it. Céline rushed eagerly towards it, when she saw, standing in the open doorway, her husband, pale, stern, and unwounded.

A few hurried whispers passed between them.

“You are safe?”

“I am.”

“And the Duke?”

“Wounded to the death.”

With a great effort she recovered her presence of mind, and taking her husband’s hand, led him forward.

“This, ladies and gentlemen,” said she, “is the little surprise of which I spoke. I am delighted to think that my attempt at improvised tragedy has met with your cordial approval.”

A prolonged round of applause followed this announcement. It was admitted on all hands that, admirably as she had shone in Comedy, it was in Tragedy that she carried off the palm.

THE MYSTERIOUS CUSTOMER.

By J. L. TOOLE.



MANY years ago, there was a very popular song in London called “The Gay Cavalier.” It was adorned with a wonderful picture of a Charles the Second gallant, all-feathered hat,

bulgy boots with lace ruffles tacked on to them, a lot of effeminate curls, and a tremendous sword decorated with ribbons. He had sneaked up a rope-ladder to serenade the idol of his affections, and seeing that she was a married woman, it was very foolish of the gay cavalier to leave his gloves behind him. The husband discovered the gloves, and that was the dramatic situation of the song.

I remember the ditty began, “’Twas a gay cavalier to a bower drew near, his lady to *ser-en-ade!*” but every other second came a doleful wail over the “glo-o-oves that never belonged to me!” They make a good many complaints, but I think that they write better songs than that now-a-days, and manage to favour the warbling actor with more metrical effusions. Did you ever hear the “’Orrible Tale,” or “Obadiah”?

The old song reminds me, however, that I

have a story about some gloves "that never belonged to me." Some of my critics say that long-fingered Berlin gloves play very many powerful parts in my repertoire ; but I will let that pass. There must be jealousy and envy in this wicked world. Many a good laugh have I got out of a good long-fingered greengrocer's glove as a muddled and a puzzled waiter ; but, bless you, it is not the glove that gets the laugh, but the art that arranges the fingers into comic attitudes. So long as the public laughs I shall stick to the gloves, so long as they stick to me. In the present case they did not stick to me at all, and hence my story.

I was out of gloves, and my fame as a low comedian was threatened with extinction ; for what could I do—hear this, O my critics—with any conceivable farce without the assistance of some comic gloves ?

You shall hear. No, joking apart, I was really out of gloves. Just listen. In "Artful Cards"—you know the piece—capital funny play by Burnand—trick act, and all that kind of thing. Well, I was playing Mr. Spicer Rumford in "Artful Cards," and you know in the second act he goes to an evening party, and he has bought a pair of white kid gloves. Burnand is far too observant an author to think of writing a play for me without gloves in some shape or other. This time they are aristocratic gloves—white kid—no greengrocer's pattern or Berlin material—regular party-going gloves, warranted not to split, at one-and-six. But they do split, and here is the fun of the introduction of those comical articles called hand-shoes by the matter-of-fact Germans. By-the-by, I imitate the music of the prominent instrument in a German band in that farce, and parade the streets with a melancholy trombone.

But to resume, I am always rushing off at a tangent. I have really got so much in my head, that I am bound to let it off occasionally.

The gloves were necessary for the fun of the play ; they must be split, or there is no fun ; and I usually keep a dozen pairs ready in case of emergency, as I have to split them before going upon the stage.

When acting in a celebrated provincial town, where they are extremely critical and particular down to the smallest detail, my dresser told me that I had no gloves ; I had used them all. I told him it was all right, I would bring some down from my box at the hotel ; but on my way to the theatre the next night, I suddenly remembered that I had forgotten the gloves.

It was a dreadfully wet night, pouring cats and dogs, and all the best shops were shut up ; so I told the coachman to stop at the first glove-shop he came to. We came to a halt at a miserable-looking fourth-rate shop, where they sold cheap braces and mouldy neckties, fly-blown shirts, and the most alarming brass studs fixed into card-board. The socks looked as if they had been knitted in the year one, and there was a thick layer of dust on the cotton pocket-handkerchiefs displayed on the chairs, and bearing upon them the coloured pictures of winners of the Derby and the Oaks ten years ago. I often wonder who buys those sporting handkerchiefs. They are not used in farces.

The proprietor of this dingy emporium was just about to close, and seemed half-asleep. I could see at once he was a surly, ill-conditioned fellow, and I don't think I improved his temper by making my request very earnestly and in a low tone, accompanied by gibberish which he could not understand.

My earnestness impressed him, but not one word could he comprehend.

I heard him muttering to himself, "What does he mean? the man's a fool." When suddenly, as he was bouncing about and losing his temper, I said, as distinctly as possible, "Have you got any white kid gloves? I don't understand your provincial dialect."

It was as well to turn the tables at once, and put him in the wrong.

He did not know whether he had any gloves, but he would see. So he groped about in a silly, aimless fashion, opening boxes of socks, neckties, under jerseys, braces, and everything but gloves, until at last, when he was red with the exertion, he found a forgotten box of white kids. They were uncommonly dusty, and had evidently been the original stock of his grandfather's shop. I picked out a pair, and he went through the stupid old formula of doubling them across my knuckles. I never found that prevented them from ripping open at the thumb during a mazy dance, or splitting at an evening party.

"I think these will do," he said.

"Oh! will they? then give me a pair of scissors."

"They are untied; you don't want any scissors."

"Yes, I do."

I then deliberately cut the gloves in five or six places! The man positively shuddered, and said, "Oh, don't!" It seemed to hurt him, although the gloves were mine. The more he shuddered, the more I cut away.

"But I could have got you a larger pair without that," he whined, as if he were in dreadful pain.

"They are quite large enough, my dear sir," I replied, hacking away; "but I like plenty of ventilation."

He shuddered again.

"Give me another pair!" I said, fiercely, as if I were thirsting for destruction.

"Will you have a larger size? Do," he murmured. "Don't hurt them," he added, with real pathos.

"No!" I said, melodramatically. "Give me some larger scissors!"

I saw a large pair of scissors on the counter, and seizing them, cut away at two or three pair as eagerly as a child cutting up paper. The more I cut, the more puzzled and distressed he looked.

"There, that will do," said I, throwing down the money and pocketing the gloves.

"Will you have any paper? Oh! dear!" he roared, as if the scissors had been ripping *him* open, and he was recovering from the shock!

"No, indeed, not I. Belinda shall be revenged!" I groaned between my teeth. "Thus will I destroy my hated rival."

He backed away from me as I waved the scissors in the air, and I could see by his terrified face that he thought I was stark staring mad. As I was leaving the shop I looked out and said,

"It's a lovely morning, isn't it?" It was seven o'clock in the evening, and raining in torrents.

"Don't talk nonsense, sir," he replied angrily, but evidently very frightened and astonished.

With a hideous grimace I left the shop, and jumped into the carriage. In five minutes I was at the theatre, trying to amuse the audience with the perplexities of Mr. Spicer Rumford, while the puzzled shopman was brooding in the little back parlour over this strange adventure with his "Mysterious Customer."

MY ANTI-CLIMAX.

By J. ASHBY-STERRY.



SOME years ago, I gave what I was pleased to denominate an "Entertainment." Rude people said the audience looked upon it in another light.

But no matter. I had a good deal more time on my hands than I have now-a-days, and I derived the keenest amusement from the whole affair, from beginning to end. If it was not an entertainment to my audience, it was a source of intense diversion to myself. It was formed on the lines of Albert Smith's famous Mont Blanc lectures. There was music, and there were patter-songs, and there were dioramic views. The trouble I had over the latter and the arrangement of a portable proscenium, I shall never forget. I was my own stage-carpenter and scene-painter, though I had many valuable hints from an amusing old gentleman, one Muffmothy, who had been connected with the property-room at Covent Garden, who used to come of an evening, do a deal of hammering, tell many theatrical anecdotes, and imbibe much brandy and water.

I called the show, "Autumn Leaves from a Tourist's Note-Book," and it was, as you may imagine, a merry chronicle of a holiday

trip through France, Switzerland, and Italy; with sketches of character; and considerable fun made out of the travelling English. There were plenty of songs, which were set to popular tunes, and there was lots of music excellently played by a dear old friend of mine, who presided at the piano. I do not think I made much money out of the affair, as, by way of getting the thing well started, I gave it for the benefit of the funds of several country literary institutions. Though I did not make much money by the project, I had no end of fun. I think I never had such a merry time in my life, and in those days one generally managed to get two shillingworth of enjoyment out of sixpence. The ancient, decaying, mildewed literary institutions, with their solemn committees, would make a chapter of themselves.

The entertainment itself was in two parts, and I was warned by an old literary friend to be sure and make my second part the strongest. Said he, "Let the affair be like a squib, brilliant throughout, but let it finish with a bang. Let people be anxiously wishing for more, and then let them find to their surprise that your entertainment is finished. You must have no dying away or tailing off. *Beware of all things of an anti-climax.*" I had a rehearsal before leaving London, but I am bound to say the thing went very badly. The scenery did not work well, the jokes were not appreciated. Then there was something wrong about the lighting. The songs did not seem to take. My friends shook their heads a good deal, and they tendered all sorts of advice at great length—which I did not take—and predicted a terrible failure.

But I was announced for the 17th of February at the Chunkleton Literary Institution, and there was no backing out of it. It was with dismal forebodings that I arrived at the town, and I was in the lowest of spirits when I was superintending the erection of my proscenium at the hall of the society. Never was the actor's proverb, "It'll be all right at night," more fully realized. The thing went off with a bang. It was a success from beginning to end, the laughter was continuous, and the applause terrific.

Things went on swimmingly till I reached Titterton. Now, at Titterton I counted on my greatest success, as I have many influential friends there and thereabouts. They had canvassed the neighbourhood; crafty anticipatory paragraphs had been inserted in the *Titterton Times*, the fame of the entertainment had been judiciously noised abroad, and I was delighted to see that "Autumn Leaves" was placarded all over the town, and small hand-bills with regard to the same might be seen in every shop-window. I was staying at Daynton Hall, in the neighbourhood. There was a large dinner-party the night before, and every one told me that everybody was going to the show, and that there was not a place to be had for love or money. Late at night I had a telegram from Muffmothy, saying that he was taken ill, and could not come down to work the scenery. This was unfortunate, but Dick Daynton kindly volunteered to fill his place. Dick was a capital hand at theatricals, and he thoroughly entered into the fun of his first appearance as scene-shifter.

Titterton Town Hall was crammed; the reserved seats were full. There was the Mayor of Titterton in all his glory; there was the Daynton Hall party occupying two

rows: there was Lord Tenniscourt and the Misses Racquets; there was old Colonel Crackerdoom; there was Sir Benjamin Bunridge, the member for the county; there were the Asper Ewshalls; there was that ancient and amusing dowager Lady Moocow and graceful Miss Claravere, the prettiest girl within fifty miles: in short, there were all the best people in and about Titterton. The two-shilling seats were crammed, and there was not standing room in the shilling gallery at the end of the hall. It was the largest audience I ever had, and the most enthusiastic. I felt their pulse, so to speak, and they seemed to be with me directly I started.

How they applauded the song "Going Across," which detailed the miseries of the Channel passage; how the description of the visitors at Lucerne seemed to fetch them; and did they not welcome my picture of sunset on the Lago Maggiore, with all its chrome and vermilion, as it had never been welcomed before? When I introduced a few sly hits at a certain "right of way" case that had recently been agitating the township, there was a roar of laughter; and when I described the peaks, passes, and glaciers, and view generally from the Rigi Kulm, in a song to the tune of the "Cork Leg," the applause was terrific. This brought me safely to the conclusion of the first part, and I retired for ten minutes for refreshment and talk with Dick Daynton behind the scenes.

"Capital! old man. You've fetched them like a snipe," said Dick—who was always somewhat confused in his metaphors—as, in the middle of a whirlwind of applause, I retired from public gaze. "You must be pretty well done, I should think? What's it to be?" he added, flourishing a corkscrew at

a perfect buffet of bottles that he had arranged for my refreshment.

"Guinness, by all that's sustaining!" I answer.

And in two minutes there was a popping of corks, and a couple of silver tankards were foaming to the brim.

"I can now understand," said Daynton, "how it is that stage carpenters are always in a chronic state of thirst. It's precious hot, and dry, and anxious work looking after your *coulisses*, I can tell you."

All this time Willy Grame was filling up the interval with most delightful music, excellently played. Under my special instructions, he was to eschew the classical, and keep strictly to the popular. The result was that feet were steadily beating time, and every head was nodding to the tune throughout the room. I often used to think that Grame's portion was by far the best part of the entertainment. On this occasion he was better than usual. He wandered from one popular tune to another, and at last he struck merrily into the "Burlesque Galop." This was too much for Dick. He seized his tankard, and away he went,

Rumty-dumty, dumty-dum,
O rumty-dumty day!

It was too much for me; my coat was off in a minute, and away I went, with my

Rumty-dumty, dumty-dum,
And rumty-dumty d-a-a-e-e!

Daynton was an excellent dancer; he had been two years in Paris, and he was a very Brididi at the *can-can*. We flung our legs about à la *Vokes*, and thoroughly entered into the spirit of the absurdity. After one of Dick's wildest *pas*, I sank exhausted on a chair, and roared with laughter. Then we heard a most terrific round of applause. I

looked up, and, to my horror, found that from the shilling gallery at the end of the room they could see right over my proscenium, and that the occupants had a full view of the extraordinary and outrageous gambols of my friend and myself. I could see that every face was agrin, and that they had apparently been enjoying the whole performance tremendously.

I looked at my watch; the ten minutes was just up. The music ceased for a moment. Willy Grame then played a few bars of "Beautiful Venice," and I re-entered to relate my Venetian experiences. As I said before, my second part was much the strongest; but, strange to say, it fell flat. My imitation of the *gondolieri*, accompanied by a *patois* song, which nobody ever understood, but which was, therefore, generally a great hit, met with little encouragement; my humorous remarks anent the "pigeons of Venice," albeit intermixed with some sly hits at the "pigeons of Titterton," scarcely raised a laugh. My pet picture of the Piazzetta by moonlight, with a practicable moon and practicable gas-lights all along the quay, and a lamp-lit gondola with a red curtain, which generally drove country audiences frantic with delight, was but faintly welcomed. My patter song, "Sterry-o-scopic Views," which was a rapid summary of my tour, introducing most of the popular airs of the day, and songs in French, German, and Italian, was but moderately applauded; and I made my bow and disappeared, quite convinced that the latter part of my entertainment was a ghastly failure.

As I was retiring, I heard, amid the faint applause, some one in the gallery shout, "Dance! dance! why don't he give us the dance?" It then struck me the reason of the coldness. In the whole of my second

part, strong though I thought it to be, there was nothing so amusing and so uproariously comic as the frantic *pas de deux*, in which Dick Daynton and myself had indulged in behind the scenes. The gallery had probably looked upon this as a rehearsal, and were disappointed that it was not eventually included in the programme. I had quite unwittingly converted the whole of my second part into an anti-climax.

I was telling this circumstance to Muff-moethy on my return to town, and he said, "Jest what I told you, sir. If you'd have given 'em the Lancashire clog-dance, in character, between the parts, why you'd have made a terrific success everywhere!"

BEHIND THE SCENES.

By KATE MUNROE.



SOME of my brothers and sisters in their varied and various communications may have been romantic, some poetical, and some personal. I intend to be practical, and to discuss a grievance. "Just look at this, just look at that!" My editor has given me leave to select my own subject; so, don't be

frightened, I am going to take you behind the scenes. It is very dark; shall I give you my hand—there, that's better.

When you go to the theatre, kind reader (I believe that is the proper way to address the public in a periodical), and see the actors and actresses in their pretty costumes and bright smiles (or the contrary), do you know, or think of, or heed, the dungeons of heat, dirt, and evil smells from which they have just emerged, and where they have had to prepare themselves for the difficult encounter?

Most of these artists (I am speaking now of what the French call the "premiers sujets") are in the receipt of good salaries, and enjoy pleasant and comfortable homes; yet at the theatre, where they are obliged to spend a third of their lives, they are cooped up in small dens, without ventilation, and generally in the vicinity of a defective drain; their dressing-rooms, as they are called, are overheated with gas, and without any comfort except such as the artists may provide for themselves. Of course they may make their rooms as luxurious as they please; and in Paris the dressing-rooms are very "coquette," with bright hangings, mirrors, and easy-chairs; but ventilation and drainage can only be attended to by the managers, and it seems a poor economy which fails to attend to these things if the parish sanitary authorities refuse to do so, and thus encounter the risk of a favourite artist falling ill during the "successful run" of a piece. And this is not all; for, in addition to these discomforts, the ventilation is artfully arranged to carry currents of fresh air just where they are not wanted, and consequently the artists are exposed to frightful draughts on leaving their hot dressing-room or the stage.

In Paris, where I have been acting lately, there is rather a good plan of having heavy

curtains to all the doors about the stage, so that in case they are left open (and they generally are) the draught is partially avoided, and it also serves to muffle the sound of talking and laughing which, I am sorry to say, sometimes disturbs the peace and calm of well-ordered discipline "behind the scenes." Now don't laugh like that, I am not guilty. What do you say about "Qui s'excuse s'accuse?" Do be quiet, and let me be practical.

The Theatre Français, in Paris, is the only theatre I know of where the artists are really at home, as they should be in a place where they pass so much of their lives. There the stage, the green-room, the corridors, and the dressing-rooms are all heated, ventilated, and lighted properly. The corridors are *carpeted*—think of that, fair comrades, imagine the bliss of being able to let the train of your dress fall, even by accident, without the heartrending certainty that it is "smudged," perhaps quite spoiled, by an instant's contact with the floor. Outside each dressing-room, in the corridor, are large cupboards where the artists keep their wardrobes for the different pieces in their repertoire; a circumstance that will account for the vexation of the artists of the Comedie Française, who were much wroth and generally cross at having the trouble of carrying backwards and forwards their costumes from the Gaiety Theatre, London. I must confess that the advantages of having a proper place to keep one's clothes in, recommends itself to the most careless of my sex. But we who act generally have to hang most of our street costume on one nail, the cloak and bonnet going to swell the pyramid, and the whole plentifully sprinkled with

white powder and dust. If we want our dressing-rooms kept fairly clean, it is only to be done by sending our own servants down to the theatre, or by heavy "tips" to one of the "dressers." It would be better if London managers adopted the Paris fashion of giving good-sized, well-ventilated rooms, and allowed each artist to bring her own furniture.

The success of all artists depends upon their having their brains clear, and being more or less physically comfortable, but it is impossible to have a clear brain in a vitiated atmosphere, or to exhibit much elasticity without even the preliminary comfort of an easy-chair.

But this is not all. The light is atrocious, and ridiculously arranged. My patient public, do not blame us if we come before you with cheeks as ghastly as a ghost or as red as a tomato, or a frightful dab of powder on our nose, for it is difficult to fix the colours properly, when one is standing in the full blaze of two glaring gas-burners, the heat causing the white and the red and the black to run together, and the cheeks getting flushed, and requiring copious "puffs" of white powder to cool them. This is generally the moment that the call-boy takes occasion to shout, "stage waits," and we dart madly away, warm and "*streaky*." These and many other woes do we endure, night after night, submissive and hopeless.

Will no one come to our rescue? or must we be put off with the old excuse—that it is all the fault of the amiable architect and the irresponsible builder. That won't pay our doctor's bill, or get us a new engagement.

There! I have had my say. I have uncorked the vials of my wrath.



EARLY EXPERIENCES.

By THOMAS THORNE.



I AM not egotistical enough, old friend, to conceive for a moment that my initiatory doings or sufferings as an actor, will in any way be of important interest to your readers; but

I trust that the recital of two or three memoranda in a not wholly unchequered life may be sufficiently amusing to credit me with a place in your interesting theatrical collection.

From the very first moment that I trod the boards, at a small theatre in the North, and at the mature and thoughtful age of sixteen, I was made master of the truth of the maxim, "There is no royal road to learning." If I was enthusiastic, I was, at all events, unambitious, and did not immediately aspire to play "Othello," or stalk the stage as Hamlet. On the contrary, when relegated to the unobtrusive part of the second nameless gentleman in the first-named tragedy, I did not demur, but hastened to study my one line (for the rest of the part was cut out), which was merely :

Second Gent. : "Tis one Iago, ancient to the General."

You may smile when I write that I "studied" one line; but it is a fact—

humiliating, perhaps—that I sat up all the night previous to the performance endeavouring to master my first spoken words on the stage. At rehearsal I was "letter-perfect"; but at night a terrible nervousness befell me, and my memory, nearly my speech, forsook me. In answer to the question, "How now? who has put in?" I managed to stammer out, "'Tis our Iago, general agent to his majesty"—at least, that was what it sounded like to the audience. I must add that my costume did not appear with greater *éclat*; my personal wardrobe consisted of a pair of "tights" (more often a misnomer), and a wig which was perfectly kaleidoscopic in colours. It varied its tint according to the requirements of the part. I chalked it for old men, I sprinkled it with red-ochre for comic country parts, I cleaned it and wore it (a light brown) for quiet do-nothing guests, and blacked it for villains and scowling smugglers.

My figure was as meagre as my stage wardrobe, and whether the costumes refused to fit *me*, or I was incapable of being fitted by *them*, will always be a debateable point.

I was not, however, the solitary offender in the company. On one occasion, being short of hands, a little fellow, the pantomime clown of the theatre, was "cast" to play a messenger in the fifth act of "Macbeth." He was a nervous man, and unfortunately possessed a miserably squeaking voice, which naturally would contrast ridiculously with the thunder tones of the "star" tragedian. On his entrance, the unhappy pantomimist perceived in the character of Macbeth a huge trumpet-tongued Scotchman, who,

after using the extremely improper language of the text, roared—

"Where got'st thou that goose-look?"

The terrified clown got out—

"There is ten thousand——"

Macb. (roaring and shaking him): "*Geese?*
Villain!"

To which the squeaking reply was—

"Yes! if you please, sir!"

I believe that the preliminary line referred to was repeated by the discomfited tragedian with more than the usual unction and personal application.

One more story, and I have done. It relates to a certain performance of "*Hamlet*," which, for an accident which therein occurred, was of infinite importance to me. The first low comedian naturally was "cast" for the principal gravedigger, and proceeded with the part up to the end of his scene, when he disappeared down the "grave-trap," and the boards closed over him. At the conclusion of the performance, however, he never re-appeared; no one had seen him leave the stage, and he had certainly not left the theatre. A careful search was accordingly made for him, but to no purpose. He was not to be found. His part in the farce had to be read by the second low comedian. I went on for the second comic part, and thereby earned my promotion, for from that time I quitted the unnamed noblemen of the Shakespearian drama for ever. We all dispersed that night in great excitement and perturbation. On the next morning the quest was renewed, and, ultimately, the first gravedigger was discovered in the vaults of a contiguous public-house, which were under the stage, and on the contents of the cellar he had incontinently levied. I suppose he was the only gravedigger that was ever buried with Ophelia.

AN ADVENTURE IN A CAR.

By MRS. JOHN WOOD.



MY first and only journey to New Orleans never shall I forget. I was on the eve of closing a really delightful engagement with Mr. Joseph Jefferson, at the Winter GardenThe-

atre, New York, and New Yorkers thought I was going to settle in their midst, when, lo! my last nights were announced in letters as long as myself. I am proud to say everybody was furious, including the manager, that Thalia Matilda (a pet name given me by the critic of the *New York Herald*) should be taken off *South*, Mr. Adolphus Davenport, or Dolly, as he was familiarly called, being also engaged to support me in the parts we had performed together in New York. The papers began to notice our coming journey, and were exquisitely funny about it, at poor Dolly's expense. "Ah!" said they, "happy Dolly! *he* will have the management of her boxes all to himself; *he* may have the happiness of carrying her keys; *he* may be allowed to hold her railway ticket," and a hundred remarks of this sort, to say nothing of the jokes of his brother actors. Every night the poor man left the theatre they would say, "Now,

Dolly, mind you take care of the 'Queen of Comedy and Song;' "Mind you look after her wardrobe, her music," etc., etc., until poor Dolly was goaded on to say at last his belief was he was going as a footman and not as an actor at all.

This fun was kept up until we started for New Orleans, escorted to the station by a crowd of actors, managers, critics, and friends, and I can see again, as I recall the scene, a hundred well-known faces, cheering on even unto the end. My heart went out to them in sheer gratitude, and so we started. We travelled until midnight, when a change of trains took place. The passengers happened to be all ladies, except one white-haired old gentleman. I noticed him, as Mr. Davenport spoke and shook hands with him on leaving the car for the smoking carriage. Having previously begged Dolly to take charge of my through ticket, my purse, in fact, all valuables that I had with me, being afraid I might lose them, I settled down to sleep. It must have been three or four hours later, I was suddenly awakened by the guard howling for my ticket. I informed him a gentleman in the smoking car had mine, and he would hand it to him. He went on; presently he returned, bawling out, "There's no gentleman got any ticket for a lady here," and he'd trouble me "not to fool him any longer."

I remonstrated mildly, and assured him the gentleman was in the smoking carriage, pointing to where Mr. Davenport had gone.

"There's no cars that way," says he; "they were all shunted at the last place an hour ago."

"Good heavens!" said I; "then the unhappy Dolly has been carried off in his sleep to unknown parts."

"Well, you'll have to get out," says the monster.

"But I am here without ticket or money, in a strange place; what am I to do?"

"Oh, you can't play that off on me," said the ogre. "I've heard all that before, how gentlemen have ladies' tickets, and are asleep in the next car; you'll have to tell that story to the station-master," and off he went.

What *was* I to do? I would pretend to be asleep, and refuse to wake. So I covered my head with a woollen scarf; it nearly suffocated me, but I could see through it without being seen. Presently I saw the guard talking to the white-headed old gentleman. Both talked in an excited manner, and looked towards me. "Oh, dear!" thinks I, "I am settled, for sure. What will become of me?" Soon after, daylight came, the demon guard still hovering near. I was expecting to be handcuffed the moment I stirred. I was faint from being covered up, and parched with thirst, but nothing could move me. The train began to slacken speed, the vendors of fruit ran alongside, but I had no money to buy any with. I was being waited for, to be turned out of the train. I was really frightened. Then came the awful moment; the train stopped—the ten minutes for refreshment was at hand—the passengers all gone. I waited, breathless. No guard. Another moment, and I said to myself, "I will spell *r-e-s-o-l-u-t-i-o-n* very slowly, and if he doesn't come, I'll take off my covering." I did so. He was not there. I opened the window, grateful for some air. I looked out upon a wilderness; and when I turned round again, there was the ogre, cap in hand, bowing before me—sarcastically, of course, I thought. I couldn't speak, but I felt I gave him a look that said, "I am hungry and friendless; what are you going to do with me?" He smiled. "Oh! if I only had a property pistol to frighten him," I thought.

"Well," said I, "are you going to put me on the side-walk?"

"Why, no, Mrs. Wood," said he; "and if I had only known it was you at first, it would have been right from the word 'go.'"

He then explained that the white-headed old gentleman had told him before he got out that I *had* come with a gentleman, that I was Mrs. John Wood, that the gentleman was Mr. Dolly Davenport, and that we were going to act at the Varieties Theatre, New Orleans; that he, the ogre, had been in several times (didn't I know it?), but, as I was so fast asleep, he waited about, not liking to disturb me.

Oh, joy! I could have hugged the monster; he was so polite; anything he could get me, he would.

"But I have no money?" said I.

"Oh! money is no object," said he.

"Isn't it?" said I. "Then I ought to have been left here long ago."

Refreshments were speedily brought, and I blessed that old gentleman for telling the ogre who I was. It had never occurred to me to do so. Presently my friend the ogre returned, saying he went no further than that station; but they had telegraphed on; and he assured me I should be looked out for and taken care of. I blessed him silently, and asked for his name and address; and I am happy to think he heard from me when he least expected it, and when he was in a greater fix than I was then. I felt a pang at parting from my benefactor; but, true to his promise, at the next station, sure enough, I was met with an ovation which was truly appreciated, and will never be forgotten by the Unprotected Female.

Arriving at Savannah, I was determined to say who I was, at once; so, sending for the proprietor of the hotel, who came directly I

was about to announce myself with very great dignity, when he quietly said, "Mrs. John Wood, I presume."

I sat down as though I had been suddenly hit; and to this day I always feel humble when I am informed who Mrs. John Wood is.

"But where is my friend Dolly?" said he. "He wrote me from New York, saying when you would be here, and to have rooms prepared for you."

I could only repeat to him what had happened.

"Ah!" said he, "the same thing often occurs, and loving families are parted for days."

"Good gracious!" thinks I, "is this a plan between the railway company and the hotel to keep people here? No! perish the thought! Such things are *never* done."

"But the boat leaves to-morrow," said I, "and not another word for a week. Dolly *must* be found."

With this he left the room, saying he would find him, if he was *alive*!

Oh, what I suffered! The night passed—no news of him. Early next morning, a telegram arrived, saying, "*Will be in time for boat.—Yours distractedly, DOLLY.*"

I flew to the proprietor, but he was out telegraphing in every direction. About an hour before the boat started they both appeared—Dolly pale, the hotel-keeper red and triumphant. Of course, Dolly had been taken off in his sleep; on waking up and discovering his position, he insisted upon the train being stopped, and his being put out there and then; and he was very much *put out* when he saw train after train pass by without noticing him. Then his despair knew no bounds, and became of such a nature, that the next train actually stopped. The sight of a gentleman standing on his head probably first attracted

the guard's attention, who, on closer observation, finding two first-class tickets stuck in the hat beside him, had him promptly secured, and placed in the train. Dolly was evidently thought to be hopelessly insane, and consequently was placed in a carriage all by himself. He could make no one hear, neither could he find out to what place he was being taken. However, it turned out he was all right for Savannah. He telegraphed from the first station, paid for it *with my money*. "His loose cash," he said, "must have all fallen out in his desperate gymnastics."

"Don't mention it, my dear fellow," said I; "only too glad to see you at the price."

So my troubles ended; but the letters poor Dolly received for the *care* he had taken of me, on the facts becoming known, may be imagined, but can never be described, by

Yours and the public's very grateful servant.

OUR SCHOOL THEATRE.

By FRANK MARSHALL.



TO be avowedly egotistical, and to write, in one's own character, of what "I did," and "I said," and "I saw," is never a very grateful task, but in narrating our personal

experiences it cannot be avoided. I propose to

give an account, which may, I hope, succeed in amusing the reader, of a theatre which we established at my first school, thirty-one years ago, and of some of the performances in which I took part. Occasional dramatic representations are now far from unusual at schools, both public and private; but I never knew any other instance of a school in which the theatre was a recognized institution.

Like the great Drama itself, which traces back its origin to Thespis and his cart, our theatre had a very humble beginning. One evening two of the bigger boys proposed to give an impromptu entertainment, to consist of "as much as they could remember of 'Box and Cox.'" They had both seen that popular farce more than once; but I, who was selected to play Mrs. Bouncer, had never even heard of it. I received my instructions, of which the principal one was to enter whenever either Box, or Cox, called "Mrs. Bouncer," and I carried them out to the best of my ability. My part in the representation proved to be more passive than active; for whenever either Box, or Cox, was at a loss for a word, which happened pretty frequently with both of them, they called vigorously for Mrs. Bouncer, and threw something hard, generally a candlestick, at her head: consequently at the end of the performance, which was received with tumultuous applause, I had gained little in the way of dramatic experience, but a good deal in the way of bruises. Whether I bore my contusions with so good a grace as to win the esteem of my instructors, or that I displayed some latent powers of acting in my attempts to dodge the candlesticks, I know not; but from that evening I was selected as the "leading lady" of the "Theatre Royal, Crescent House," for so our dramatic establishment was afterwards named.

The founder and stage-manager of our company was a boy whom we called "Dally." I have a vague idea he was related to somebody who knew Edmund Kean; be that as it may, he was to us boys a prodigy of dramatic experience and talent; we looked up to him with reverence, and he enforced, as will be seen hereafter, the strictest discipline among his troupe. Our school had only about thirty boys in it; the wife of the assistant master kept a girls' school, where many of our sisters were, but they were only allowed to take part in our performances as spectators. To them the first two rows of the pit were dedicated, and with the masters and their families and the boys who did not act, they constituted our audience, which was not a very large one.

I do not think the regular company ever included more than ten, or at most a dozen members; it was considered a great privilege to belong to it, as we enjoyed complete official recognition and patronage, and our rehearsals were strictly guarded from any intrusion on the part of non-members of the company.

But I am anticipating: for it took some time to establish ourselves on a regular basis. The second performance was more ambitious, but it was exceptional; it consisted of an original play, written by one of the company. I do not remember the title of it, but I will call it, "The Fatal Blacking-box." It was of the rudest simplicity as regarded its construction. Every character introduced himself to the audience in a soliloquy, and this they did in succession; so that of dialogue, strictly speaking, there was not much. The first to enter was a serio-comic servant (played by the author), who carried a blacking-box, which he set down at the O. P. entrance, in order that every one of the other characters might tumble over it as they made their

several exits, all of them entering for their respective soliloquies from the Prompt Side. This was the comic element of the piece, which was not a success, and was never repeated; henceforth we relied on the published drama. The production of this unique work—in which, by the way, I had no part—was remarkable for an attempt to establish an orchestra, which also failed. A boy, whom we will call "Tony," burning with zeal and emulation, resolved to organize a band among the non-members of the dramatic company. He chose seven assistants, and with them started on an expedition "down the town" in search of instruments. Each musician hired or bought what instrument he pleased, being guided simply by his inherent predilection, and not by any skill in the art of playing thereon. The overture, led by Tony with a never-silent drum, was a thing to remember. Wagner might have taken a hint from it as far as noise went. Every member of the band played his own instrument as loudly as ever he could—there being no preliminary agreement as to time, tune, or duration of the overture. My head aches when I think of it. Happily the authorities sternly interposed, after the author of the piece had in vain threatened the leader of the band with personal violence.

The next piece selected was "Bluebeard," in which I was cast for Fatima. We made our own dresses, glazed calico and spangles being the chief materials. Wonderful garments resulted from our unskilful efforts, and great disputes occurred over the spangles, of which I succeeded in getting more than my share. I was very proud of my costume, and should have enjoyed the performance most thoroughly, had not Bluebeard, even at rehearsals, been too conscientiously realistic in the scene where he discovers Fatima's disobedience; he really dragged me by my

hair, and after this my second performance I was confirmed in my opinion that the art of acting was a painful one to acquire. But I was not dismayed, and took home the part of Zitella, in "Masaniello," to study during the holidays, delighted with the prospect of being able to get the assistance of my mother's maid in the construction of my dress. "Masaniello" was a great success; and our head-master kindly provided us thenceforward with a movable proscenium and green curtain, the putting up of which in the principal school-room on the day of our performances, was always the subject of great excitement among the boys.

I never was so happy at any school as at dear old Crescent House, and I think our theatre had a great deal to do with it. How we enjoyed the rehearsals! They took place in a room in which our boots were kept, in little pigeon-holes all round the wall, but otherwise scantily furnished; and the fact of the other boys being rigidly excluded, the shutters even being closed to prevent their peeping in from the playground, gave to the whole proceedings a delicious air of mystery. Dally, the stage-manager, sat on a play-box, and put us through our paces with great severity. Woe to the younger members of the company who were imperfect! We had to write out our parts, as there was only one book, which the prompter had. The head-master acted as censor, and, like Colman the elder, "cut out all the damns." Our repertoire was selected chiefly from Cumberland's "British Drama," and would be considered rather a heavy one nowadays. We inclined to pieces of serious interest. I do not think we played any farces; the bill consisting of a drama and a burlesque. "*Chrononhotonthologos*" and Planché's "*King of the Antipodes*" were our

two favourite after-pieces. I do not remember many of the parts I played in the dramas; but Helen Macgregor, in Rob Roy, and the Queen in Richard II. (not Shakespeare's play), were two of them. The latter will always have for me a painful association, as the boy who played Richard II., a great friend of mine, died suddenly, after a short but mysterious illness, about a year or so after I left the school. His was one of the few performances which at all impressed me; he looked the youthful king to the life, and had a remarkably sweet voice. Our leading actors, Dally included, were, I fancy, rather heavy in their style.

The discipline enforced by our stage-manager was, as I have mentioned, very strict. Once I rebelled, but unsuccessfully. Ever since the performance of "Masaniello" I had felt a kind of muffled discontent; why should I be condemned to play stupid girls' parts, when I was so fitted to be a Brigand? The piece was revived, and with it my discontent. The dresses were much improved, and those gorgeous figures with sugar-loaf hats, ribands round their legs, and real guns in their hands, filled me with envy. I would bear it no longer. I was nearly nine years old, and my breast was swelling with manly dignity. It was the day for a rehearsal. I was cast for one of the most melancholy heroines in our repertoire. I felt the time was come. It happened on that day my mother came from London to see me; I was called away at twelve o'clock to all the joys of a dinner at the principal hotel, and a tour among the shops afterwards. The rehearsal was at half-past four, and I was bound to be back in time for it. To the astonishment of my mother, I refused all chocolate and sweets and other dainties most resolutely. "What would you like, my dear?" she asked. "That

cane," I replied, pointing to one with a lapis-lazuli handle. It was a man's cane, but she bought it for me. I handled it with as much dignity as I could assume. When I got back to my school, it was nearly five o'clock. I walked, cane in hand, and full of manly resolution, into the green-room. "You're late, Little Jimmy"—(a name given me for the very sufficient reason that I had a brother who had been at the same school, whose second name was James, but who never was called by it)—"You're late, Little Jimmy, but as you've been with your mamma, this time we'll excuse you." Thus spoke Dally. The cue for my entrance in the piece came; I did not move. "Now then, Little Jimmy, that's your cue." I grasped my cane, as a support to my dignity, and said, with resolution, "I don't play any more girls' parts; I'm going to play a Brigand, with ribands round my legs!" There was slight consternation among the company. "You will go on with your part," said Dally. "No, I won't." "Oh, you won't." "No; I play men's parts in future," was my stern reply. There was a pause. "What's that you've got in your hand, Little Jimmy?" "It's a cane mamma gave me." "And a very nice one too; let me look at it." I gave the cane to Dally reluctantly, because I felt the possession of that manly article was the mainstay of my courage. "Very pretty," says Dally. "Are you going on with your part?" "No," I replied, "unless you let me play a Brigand with a gun and ribands round my legs." Scarcely were the words out of my mouth, than down came the cane on my posterior regions with a vigour which did credit to Dally's muscular development. I gave in, and went on with my part; and I never rebelled again.

Sometimes there have been moments, I

confess, in later life, when, during rehearsals of a piece of my own, I have been tempted to wish that Dally's discipline could be enforced on other than juvenile actors.

"Tony," whose semi-mutinuous attempt to establish an orchestra I have already recorded, became a most important personage in our company. He was never allowed to act, but he was received within the mystic circle, which he so much coveted to enter, as prompter, property-master, and general factotum. To see him arrange the chairs and tables on the stage was a treat; he was gloriously self-important and most amiably officious. Once when I was playing the Queen in "*Chrononhotonthologos*," one of my satin shoes came off, and down I went on my back, with my hoops over my head; it was Tony who rushed on the stage and dragged me off before the awkwardness of my situation was fully realized by the audience. If the rehearsals were delightful, spite of Dally's discipline, how much more so were the cosy little suppers which we enjoyed after the performance. The "company" supped by themselves, and always had some little extra delicacy provided for them.

My "benefit" and last appearance took place in the part of Imogen, in "*Bertram*." When any of us took a benefit (which was only on leaving the school), the audience contributed presents in kind, such as knives, marbles, pictures, and even "tuck," as all kinds of sweets, cakes, etc., were called. I shall never forget that dismal tragedy of *Maturin's*. I can only recall one line, the first of Imogen's opening speech—

"The limner's art can trace the absent feature."

I had not the faintest notion what "limner" meant, and my ignorance vexed my soul. I asked Bertram confidentially, at rehearsal, but his answer was vague. "Limner? Oh!

- of course—it means a limner, you know—something to do with limbs.” I went to Dally. “Do tell me what ‘a limner’ is, Dally?” “Look here, Little Jimmy,” was his answer, “I’m not a dictionary, and if you come here asking me impertinent questions, I shall have to give you another taste of mamma’s cane.” At last I ventured to ask the “Censor,” and he solved the mystery. By dint of hard study I mastered the lines of my part. We had a very full house. I was very nervous, and sat shivering before the fire in white muslin, with magnificent back hair (hired for the night at 2s. 6d.) flowing down my shoulders. Bertram consoled me with tea and buttered rolls. I have not the faintest conception what my performance was like, but, I should think, unmitigatedly bad. However, I had a good reception, and the quantity of presents I received from my school-fellows showed the good-will they bore me. I had pocket-knives enough to last me my life, if I had not lost them all, as I did, before the year was out. One present touched me particularly: “marbles” was a favourite game with us, in all its varieties, and great contests took place amongst us. Each had his favourite “agate” or “blood-alley.” One of the latter kind, with which its owner had won several matches, was much envied by all of us, and five times its value had been offered in vain for it, both in coin and in exchange. I coveted it particularly, but could never persuade the owner to part with it. Fancy my delight when, wrapped up in a piece of paper, I found the much-coveted “blood-alley” among the tributes of the audience!

About two years after I left, the “Theatre Royal Crescent House” ceased to exist. Many improvements, including “real scenery from London,” had been introduced; but

some Evangelical parents, hearing of these dramatic representations, objected to them most vehemently, and the theatre was closed for good and all. I can safely declare that, so far from doing us any harm, these humble efforts at “play-acting” did us a great deal of good: our memories were cultivated to a degree that no less pleasant work could have effected, and we had implanted in us a taste for what, to my mind, is the noblest form of all literature, the Drama, in its widest and highest sense.

A PAINFUL PREDICAMENT.

EXPERIENCED BY
GEORGE GROSSMITH, JUN.



SOME years ago, I was engaged, in conjunction with my father, to give recitals at a town some forty miles from London. I arrived at about half-past seven, the entertainment

being announced to commence at eight o'clock. I was not due until half-past, as my father's pleasant duty was to occupy the first half hour, or as he humorously put it, to play the audience in, get them into a good temper, and thus well prepare them for me. I there-

fore took my time, and did not commence to dress till the last moment, when I found, to my dismay, that the most important part of my evening dress had not been put in my portmanteau. Finding that a "pair" could not be borrowed in the hotel, I rushed madly over the town, calling at the public-hall on my way in time to tell my father what had happened, and to go on with the recital until I sent him up word to say I was ready. I shall not easily forget my misery. Nearly every shop was shut; the few that were open did not sell ready-made clothes of any description. At last, in a back street turning out of the market-place, I espied an establishment with many jets of gas flaring, and many pairs of corduroys, white ducks, and bright lavender nether garments (some of the latter marked, "Soiled, 5s. 9d.") hanging outside. I rushed in, positively trembling with nervous excitement.

"Oh, I've met with an accident. I have a party to go to, and have left part of my dress suit behind. Can I hire or even buy a ready-made pair of doeskins?"

Avoiding the question, the man stared at me, and said, "You're Mr. Goldsmiff. I've heard you at the Polytechnic. My boys sing one of your songs with your portrait outside. I know you."

"Will you answer my question?"

The ninth part of a man said, "You won't get a pair ready-made, sir, in the town. People who requires things of that kind want them only for parties or funerals, and then they are made to order."

"Can you recommend a place to go to, or what to do? I am a stranger in this town. I'll pay anything for them as long as I can get them," I said, in desperation, hearing the clock strike half-past eight.

"I have it, sir." What joy there was in

those words! "You're a little man, like myself." As a matter of fact, he was much shorter, and very much inclined to embonpoint.

I said, "Well, go on, I have not a moment to spare."

"I'll lend you a pair, sir, that I had to go to my poor uncle's in."

I shuddered at the idea, and said, "I'd rather buy a pair—yours won't fit." However, it was a case of Hobson's choice. "What have I to pay?"

"Nothing, sir; all I ask is an order for this evening's entertainment."

I would not have had him in the audience for anything. I again insisted on paying.

"Well, if you won't give me an order I'll pay to hear you, sir. I won't take any money of you, sir."

Hobson's choice again. I wrote him a pass while he made me up a parcel, with which I returned in hot haste to the hotel, where I dressed in five minutes. In less than ten I was at the town-hall, where I managed to catch the eye of my father, who was on the platform reciting, and also, I believe, was ingeniously dovetailing Artemus Ward into his selection from Dickens, in order to fill out the time for my benefit. Eventually my turn came. I have purposely avoided mentioning anything about the fit of the borrowed garments, the subject being exceedingly painful to me. Not only did I feel conscious of my absurd aspect, but, to add to my discomfiture, I suddenly saw my benefactor seated in the front row of the stalls, regarding my appearance with pride. He never once looked at my face; he was far more interested in the other end of me. At the conclusion of the entertainment, which will be for ever graven on my memory, the tailor approached me, and, in the presence of the

committee, congratulated me cordially on the success—not of my entertainment (I do not suppose he paid attention to a word of that), but of that portion of his own attire in which “he went to his poor uncle’s.”

A WRESTLING MATCH.

BY BARRY SULLIVAN.



SOME years ago, while on my first professional tour of America, I played an engagement in New Orleans, and my “Shylock” night will be ever memorable to me, from an occur-

rence that took place in the St. Charles’s Hotel, my temporary abode. During my short stay in the city I had made the acquaintance of a Mr. Rose, a well-to-do man, a great lover of the drama, and a pleasant companion.

On the evening in question my new-found friend had taken seats for the performance, and we were enjoying a quiet chat on the subject of the play, while Mrs. Rose, who had just left us, had gone to her room to make some necessary change in her toilette.

While we were thus pleasantly occupied, a friend of Rose’s, somewhat overcharged with wine, came into the bar, “liquored

up” once more, and with his irrelevant remarks, soon put Shakespeare to flight. He had been to a wrestling match, had caught the spirit of the entertainment, and began challenging everybody to throw him. To my surprise, he eventually challenged Rose, a more powerful man than himself, to try a fall there and then, on the spot.

Rose in the kindest manner possible evaded the challenge. “No, no,” “not now,” “not here,” “some other time,” etc., etc.; but all to no purpose, unless, perhaps, to make the man more insisting and determined to have his own way; indeed, he went so far as to seize Rose by the collar to compel him to wrestle, whether he liked to do so or not.

At last, after being taunted and laid hold of several times, Rose, losing all patience, closed with his tormentor, and threw him heavily. The man, whose name I forget, raised himself slowly, and, without saying a word, lurched sulkily out of the bar. I congratulated Rose on having got rid of such an insolent and importunate person, and a few minutes afterwards took my leave, and strolled to the theatre.

Half-an-hour had scarcely elapsed, when, to my horror, I heard, in my dressing-room, of the tragical termination to this impromptu match. Rose remained in the bar, waiting till his wife should be ready, and talking with his friends; his antagonist returned, walked deliberately towards him, and, without uttering a word, took out a revolver, and shot him in the back. Rose turned around quickly, and advanced upon his assassin—another shot! Still he advanced, and still another shot. The next instant Rose had seized the murderer, wrenched the pistol from his grasp, and with it struck him a crushing blow upon the forehead. Again was the coward’s weapon

raised against himself ; and with the second terrible stroke, both men fell to the ground. His left hand still clutching the wretch's throat, Rose, with a dying effort, got to his knees, raised the revolver for yet another blow, when, with a convulsive quiver, his whole body seemed to collapse, and he fell dead, across the face of his murderer.

The tragedy was so suddenly, so swiftly enacted, that interference or prevention had been impossible.

The corse of poor Rose was borne to his rooms. While ascending the stairs, the sad little procession was met by the unfortunate wife, gaily dressed to go to the theatre with the husband she had left but a short half-hour before, in full and happy life, and whose cruel murder she thus suddenly and hideously realized.

That part of the picture I will not dwell upon ; it may be better imagined than described by me. The wretched man, who had taken such terrible vengeance for his self-sought and well-merited defeat, never spoke again ; he died three days after his victim—slain, and righteously slain, by his own murderous weapon.

BOHÈME.

A FRENCH SONG.

BY HERMAN MERIVALE.

JOYEUX pays des gens joyeux,
Les beaux esprits de ce bas monde,
Pour te donner à nos aïeux,
Vénus sortit jadis de l'onde.
La belle reine de bonté
Protégera tout cœur qui aime,
Et vit toujours, dans sa beauté,
Pour les enfans de la Bohême.

Le musicien va fredonnant
Les doux airs de son répertoire ;
Le peintre vient en exploitant
Les belles couleurs pour sa victoire ;
Le poète rêve le beau,
Chantant en dépit de soi-même ;
Le luth, la plume, le pinçeau,
Ouvrent pour nous nôtre Bohême.

La route parsemée de fleurs,
Voilà bien d'autres qui s'avancent ;
En foule viennent ces chers pécheurs,
Les gens qui jouent—les gens qui dansent :
Il est heureux, le Bohémien,
Car, pour bien égayer sa serre,
Il peut cueillir, sur son chemin,
Les plus belles filles de la terre.

Verçons le bon vin pétillant,
À l'avenir ne songeons guère,
Si le sort pour nous est méchant,
Vive l'avenir ! buvons la bière !
Nous donnons gaîment d'une main,
Quand nous avons la bourse pleine,
Et de l'autre prenons demain,
Des bons amis qui ont la veine.

Le dévôt maudit son voisin,
Tous les dimanches à la messe,
Mais prêchera pour nous en vain,
Son évangile de tristesse ;
Qu'il se fasse sa propre loi !
Faisons-y guerre, et à outrance ;
Nôtre devise—c'est la Foi,
La Charité, et l'Espérance.

Tout las de travail—où de vin,—
Bien doucement quand on sommeille,
Là-haut, un petit chérubin
Sur nous exprés sans cesse veille ;
Ainsi, quand au dernier moment
La mort à nôtre porte sonne,
Saluons-la en souriant—
" Viens ! je n'ai fait mal à personne ! "

Nous croyons à la Vérité,
La droite ligne de la vie,
De l'amour et de l'amitié
La seule franc-maçonnerie :
Le sage ne croit à rien,
Excepté toujours à soi-même ;
Mais le bon Dieu, qui fait tout bien,
Chérit ses enfans de Bohême.

MY FIRST ENGAGEMENT.

By CHARLES WARNER.



GO on the stage ! I'd sooner stand on his grave." These were the words used by my father when informed by my mother that I had determined to adopt the theatrical profession.

All arguments, all persuasions were in vain. He was firmly fixed in his resolve that I should never become an actor. Nothing on earth could move him. He said he had suffered sufficiently himself by being disobedient, and by doing just what I intended to do ; for I must tell you it was a great grief to my father in after-life that he ever went upon the stage himself. Somehow or other it was not congenial to his tastes, and I verily believe he detested it. Possibly he had not sufficient energy and perseverance for it, and the whole thing was distasteful to him ; perhaps it was because he felt very much the loss of his parents, whom he had left one evening on board ship with his brothers and sisters, all bound for America ; he was to have accompanied them, his passage, of course, being taken with theirs, but he never saw them for many years after that eventful night ; and from that moment America claimed, and the civil

war killed, the best part of my nearest relatives.

There is an exception to every rule, and although I know there are scores of young men almost daily situated as I was then—stage-struck and infatuated—still in the long run obedience to advice is far better than the course I took, and my father before me. It turned out well with me : it might be an unlucky disaster to others.

At any rate, the stage I was determined to try. Although I was studying to become an architect, it was not congenial to me ; and one morning I strolled into Bow Street, having, of course, heard my father speak of the agents and a Mr. Turner. Old Mr. Turner, of the Strand Theatre, was a friend of my father's, and to his offices I repaired, presented myself, and told him my mission.

"The stage, the stage ! You're very young, and of course quite inexperienced. I'm afraid I can't do much for you ; general utility, eh ? in a small provincial theatre with good practice best thing. Come to-morrow at twelve."

My heart was bursting with expectation as, next morning, I arrived at the office. I was to be introduced to a manager. I felt dreadfully nervous, but soon gained a little courage as Mr. R——, the manager, kindly spoke to me, and encouraged me ; he thought he might be able to give me an opening as "utilitarian," at a small salary.

"That, sir, is all I desire, only a chance. Let me gain experience ; I don't care how hard I work." He laughed.

"Ah ! you'll find plenty of work, my dear boy, with us."

On my word, he only spoke too truly. I did find plenty of work ; sometimes fifteen parts a week. Well, all was arranged and engagement settled ; but how to get from home ? I

had no properties, and no money, save a few shillings pocket money ; however, I made a confidante of my sister, and she assisted me in my dreadful designs. She gave me about thirty shillings, and with this sum I repaired to Vinegar Yard, Drury Lane, to a second-hand theatrical *dépôt*, and purchased several useful properties—sword, white wig, stockings, etc. ; and these articles, with a few that I had quietly appropriated from father's stock, I thought would furnish me. But, O heavens, when I tried on the stockings they were sizes too large for my shanks : for, I don't mind telling you, I was a long thin youth, very thin indeed ; and my legs, oh, my legs, what was I to do ? Happy thought ! my sister came to the rescue, and made me a pair of lovely legs. She dexterously sewed some pieces of flannel, piled one upon another together, and when I placed them on the spot where my calf ought to have been they looked magnificent.

"There's a leg !" I exclaimed, with delight. "What a muscle !" I thought nothing about my poor body being so thin. That was quite a secondary consideration, as long as my legs were all right.

At length the eventful day arrived that was to take me away. I had never left home before, and I felt heart-sick, for we were all very united and affectionate. Dear mother, how she cried the night before, when I said "Good-bye," and kissed her ! For I was to get away without father's knowledge, and my sister was to meet me at the station to see me off safe. The morning came. We arrived at Euston Square. My sister said she would not let me go alone, so we both jumped into the carriage, and whistle away went the train before I could induce her to alter her mind. What a wretched, wretched journey ! how utterly miserable we both felt when we arrived

at S——, the nearest station to our theatrical town !

On alighting at H——, a few miles' drive from the station, my first anxiety was to find the theatre. I did so, but it was closed. I knocked and kicked at the door, but no reply. I was about retiring in despair, when a man came up with a bundle of bills under his arm and a paste-pot of huge dimensions.

"What dost thee want kicking door down like tha't, thee fool ?" he asked, as he commenced pasting up some bills on the walls.

"I wanted to inquire about the opening night," I modestly replied.

"Oh ! be you one of the players ? 'Cos company don't come back from Lichfield till Saturday, and I'm putting up opening bill."

"Thanks," I said, as I scanned the bill, expecting, of course, to see my name in the cast ; but it was not there, and consequently I imagined that I did not play the opening night.

Saturday came, and I arrived at the theatre to meet the manager on his return from his tour ; for he had several small theatres, and used to visit them in turns during the year. As I stepped upon the stage, he kindly introduced me to the stage-manager, Mr. T——.

"Oh, Mr. Warner ! a slight mistake in the bill. Your name did not appear ; but I have two parts for you for this evening."

That was a cheerful announcement for a young hand at this difficult work.

I trembled with fright. "What, sir ! it's three o'clock now, and two parts for to-night !"

"Oh, yes ; you'll be all right. Here you are," he said, placing parts in my trembling hands—*Bras Rouge*, in "*Mysteries of Paris*," and *Saib*, in "*Castle Spectre*."

"But, sir, it's impossible I can do it."

"Can't do it ! Nonsense, my boy ; you must do it. Clear stage, and we'll run through them."

We did run through them ; and if ever a poor fellow regretted adopting the stage for a profession, I did that afternoon. But I had a wonderful study ; and so I went home and swallowed the parts with a cup of tea. My sister arranged my little properties, and all seemed well. But I must tell you, Saib, one of the parts assigned, was a black but virtuous slave. My calves were to come into requisition, as I was only to wear black fleshings or tights, with a loose Indian shirt. When night came, I was dressed for Saib, and I heard remarks anything but complimentary from the actors, who all dressed in one long room : my legs—flannel legs—being specially selected for chaff. I must have looked awfully funny ; a tall, raw-boned youth, with very little flesh on my bones, and those enormous legs. Well, I got on the stage, and my first scene nearly over. I had a terrific struggle with Earl Percy, in the piece. On rising from the ground, where he had thrown me in the terrible encounter, there was a loud laugh from all parts of the house. I could not tell, in my nervous excitement, what had happened. Earl Percy pointed to my poor legs ; and there were the huge calves in front of my shins. In the struggle they had slipped round, and deformed my otherwise very straight legs. Oh, if I could only sink through the stage ! But, no, I must finish the scene. And finish it I did, amid the laughter of the whole house. I may add that they made me double a part in this piece, from Saib to a Captain of the Guard. It was a very quick change, and on resuming the dress of Saib, my right calf was nowhere to be found. I was in despair.

"Sir, there is a stage wait for you," cried a voice ; and in my terrible excitement I rushed on the stage, with one huge stuffed leg, and

the other a poor spindle-shank, shrivelled like King Richard's arm.

Never shall I forget the peals of laughter as I entered. Speaking was out of the question. After many vain attempts, I made a most ignominious exit. I never wore flannel again.

After a time, with study and hard work, Mr. R—— prophesied that I should some day make a name. I have struggled for it ; I have aimed high, for my labour is one of love ; and I confess I am rewarded : for my old father, who uttered such prophetic warnings against the wisdom of a youthful impulse, has lived to say, "Charlie, my dear boy, I am glad you accepted your *first engagement*."

A DOG'S TALE.

By JOHN HARE.



HERE are scores of instances of a *mus ing* error caused by mistaken identity on the part of the unfamiliar public, when an actor or actress appears off the stage, *in propria persona*, and away from the glare of the footlights. Such errors are far more common with the actor of character than with the light comedian, who, as a general rule, keeps his

own face, hair, and appearance in ten out of every dozen plays in which he acts. But the personator of strong character, who is alternately grey, red, brown, white, and black—now of the old school and now of the young, now slim and angular and now stout and puffy—is often difficult to recognize when he is out of his stage dressing-room and mixing with his companions and contemporaries.

As an instance of the mistakes innocently made by the public in regard to public performers, I may perhaps be pardoned in relating an anecdote connected with myself, which, if it does not bear the stamp of novelty, is at any rate unquestionably true. Though recognized as a very old man by the public, I am bound to confess that amongst my friends I am said to be remarkable for the youthfulness of my appearance.. This is an idiosyncrasy which doubtless I shall get over, and it is one amongst many of the sins of youth that can be generously pardoned. Some years ago, I believe I was not more than twenty-seven years of age—the books of the Registrar-General are certainly not so complimentary as my companions—but when such reputation as I possessed had been made as an actor of “old men,” I happened, in the presence of a friend—a well-known London solicitor—to express a careless wish to purchase a bull-terrier dog. The words were no sooner out of my mouth than he told me that he could accidentally help me out of my difficulty, and, he trusted, in the most satisfactory manner. One of his articled clerks happened to be a great amateur dog-fancier, and had just such an animal as I wanted, and one that he would be glad to dispose of. He further added that he would tell his clerk to call on me on the following morning, and bring the dog with

him for my inspection. I protested against putting this gentleman to so much inconvenience on my account; but my friend replied that, so far from being an inconvenience to his clerk, he would enjoy it immensely, as he had frequently expressed a great desire to see me (in whose professional career he was kind enough to have expressed himself much interested) off the stage. Accordingly, the next morning, very early, while I was still in bed, the amateur dog-fancier arrived with the bull pup. I got up, slipped on my clothes, and went down to him; did not like the dog, but took it out of the room to show it to some members of my family. On my return I made some excuse for its not being bought, and he left very abruptly, and apparently somewhat disgusted.

I naturally thought the cause of his altered manner was disappointment at not having found a purchaser; but I was mistaken as to the cause of his vexation, for on meeting my friend, the solicitor, he told me that when his articled clerk returned to the office, he asked him if he had seen Hare?

He said, “No!”

“Why, how was that? I thought you went up to his house on purpose to see him?”

“So I did.”

“And did you take the dog?”

“Of course!”

“Well, what then?” asked the puzzled solicitor.

“Most horrid nuisance! After all the trouble I have taken, and going miles out of my way!” he replied.

“Why, was he not civil?”

“I don’t know. I only saw young Hare; the old boy was in bed, and the young one knew nothing about dogs!”

We have often laughed over that story.

MY DÉBUT AS OPHELIA.

By HENRIETTA HODSON.



WHEN I was fourteen years old, my mother said to me, "If you wish to become an actress you must begin at once, for you will never do anything on the stage if

you do not learn acting like your A B C at school." So I was sent off to Glasgow.

On my arrival there, the manager, Mr. Glover, told me that I was to receive a salary of eighteen shillings a week, and Mrs. Glover, the manager's wife, explained to me that out of this I ought to put by a little for a rainy day. She had taken a lodging for me, consisting of a room, in which every piece of furniture—after Scotch fashion—was a surprise. The bed was in a recess in the wall, with a door before it, the washstand became a table, and the dressing-table closed up and became a cabinet. So, during the day, I had a sitting-room, and at night a bedroom, all in one. For this I paid four-and-sixpence per week. With the rest of my salary, I had to provide myself with food and clothing. I felt myself quite a millionaire, for I never had had more than a shilling of my own in my life before; but it was difficult to follow the

advice of Mrs. Glover, and to put aside anything, because I could not resist investing my savings in tarts and sugar-plums, and other such perishable commodities.

At first I used to walk on the stage as a speechless peasant, court lady, or page, and to dance in the back row of the ballet. After six months I was given a part of two lines. I sat up all night to study it, repeating the lines over and over again, and placing the emphasis first on one word and then on the other.

When the eventful night came on which I was to speak for the first time on the stage, I was so nervous, that I broke down in my second line. This was considered a great disgrace, and I was put back for another three months into the ballet and the "speechless ladies."

My next speaking part was of six lines, and this, as the manager made me rehearse it to him again and again, I got through without breaking down; on which I became a "speaking lady," and was promoted to the front row of the ballet.

At the end of the year, there was a vacation of a month at the Theatre, and I did not know what to do, for all my "rainy day money" had found its way to the pastry-cook's shop. Luckily a little town near Glasgow had asked one of the actors to come there for a short season, and bring with him a company. He proposed to me to go with him, and we started off by rail, third-class, of course—two gentlemen and two ladies—to perform a series of Shakespearian plays, for we were all of us very ambitious. We were to receive one half of the entire receipts, and we fancied that our fortunes were already made. On reaching the little town, we found that the theatre was a railway arch with a platform at one end, and no scenery. The one

dressing-room consisted of a hole in the back of the arch, divided into two parts by a low screen.

But we were not daunted. Every night we played a fresh tragedy. Of course we all "doubled" and "trebled" parts. In "Macbeth" I played, I remember, Lady Macbeth, Hecate, and the three witches all in one, and sang Locke's music; whilst Macbeth, Macduff, and the gentlewoman joined in the chorus behind the screen.

The last night's performance was announced for my special benefit. The play was to be "Hamlet," and I was to play Ophelia, and Osric in the last act. My first troubles began with my dress, for you may imagine that none of us had a very grand wardrobe. The dress I had worn for Lady Macbeth did for the first of Ophelia's; but as it was my benefit, I wished to be correct in my costume, and wear a white dress for the mad scene, for no Ophelia, I knew, would be considered mad, even in a railway arch, without being in white, with straw in her hair. Now, I had plenty of straw, but no white dress; for Osric, too, I had no costume. As I was sitting over my "tea-dinner," meditating over all this, a brilliant thought occurred to me. I determined to take the table-cloth with me to the arch, as I was certain that I could drape it over a white petticoat for Ophelia in her mad scene; and then, with a sword-belt round my waist, convert it into a tunic for Osric.

I had just settled all this, when a note came to say that Hamlet was ill. It was brought by a Scotchman, who was Hamlet's landlord, and who looked very much surprised when, on reading it, I burst into tears. He asked me why I was crying, and I explained to him that I was in despair at not being able to play Ophelia, for this was

impossible with a table-cloth, but with no Hamlet.

"Hey, dinna fash yoursel', lassie. I ken every worrd o' the pairt, and sooner than ye'll be disappointed, I'll act it mysel'," he said.

"But have you ever played it?" I asked.

"No," he answered, "but I've often been to Glaskie, and seen it acted by the best o' them."

My friend, who seemed, like the table-cloth, to be sent me by Providence, to get me out of my difficulties, was a tall, raw-boned Scotsman, with a shock crop of red hair and still redder whiskers. He did not look exactly like the Prince of Denmark, or, at least, he was not precisely my idea of him.

However, it was getting time for us to be preparing for the performance, so with the Scotchman and the table-cloth I went off to my arch.

The Hamlet of the company was a very short man, but my new recruit had to wear his clothes, and very wonderful he certainly looked when he was arrayed in a black suit, the sleeves of which just reached below his elbows. He did know the words, but that was all. No sooner did he begin to speak, than a boy in the back seats cried out—

"Hey! that's na Hamlet; that's oore Johnny McKillup, wha keeps the sweetie shop where ane o' the play-actors lodges."

After this the play became more of a farce than a tragedy, for whenever Johnny McKillup appeared the audience roared with laughter, in which, notwithstanding my feeling of gratitude to him, I could hardly help joining, for his acting was as peculiar as his accent, and people then had not been educated into enthusiasm for new readings of Hamlet. My table-cloth was a success.

In Ophelia's mad scene it really did look quite like a dress; and when I came on as Osric, with it tucked up, it looked like a tunic. But, alas! when Hamlet was fighting his duel in the last act, and I had to say, "A hit—a palpable hit!" my belt gave way, and I stood before the audience again in the drapery of the mad Ophelia, who had just drowned herself. After this it was impossible to finish the piece. What with Hamlet's red whiskers, and Osric in Ophelia's table-cloth, not another word could be heard. So, in despair, I asked Hamlet whether he could dance a Scotch reel? "Aye," he said, and as I knew that the King and Queen could do so too, for I had often danced one with them at the Glasgow Theatre,

I went forward to the footlights, and told the two fiddlers, who represented the orchestra, to strike up one at once. Hamlet and I, the King and the Queen, took our places for the reel, the fiddlers commenced, and off we went.

The audience seemed at first taken aback by this strange termination to "Hamlet," but the laughter soon turned into applause, and when the curtain came down it had to go up again, for they insisted upon having, not "Hamlet," but the reel over again.

I made three pounds seven shillings and sixpence by my benefit, but little of this was put aside for the rainy day, as most of it went in sweeties that I bought at the shop of Johnny Hamlet McKillup.

XAROLLA: A CIRCUS STORY.

By ALFRED THOMPSON.



WHEN I first had the honour of making Carry's acquaintance, she was only known as *La Petite Caroline*, and she was then not more than twelve. We were quar-

tered at Spirebury; and when Professor Sutton's Grand International Hippodrome came

and pitched itself in the Abbey Fields, we hailed its advent with delight.

The officers of the 31st Dragoon Guards, then getting through existence at Spirebury, were considered free of the circus and its surroundings, their presumed knowledge of horseflesh being a passport to Professor Sutton's stables; and the natural amiability of the equestrian ladies and gentlemen was turned to an affable familiarity with anything in spurs and moustaches that hailed from the cavalry barracks, before the circus had been opened for a week.

Everybody, whether military or civilian, admired little Caroline. There was nothing she could not do. I am not at all sure that she could write, and I never heard her read

more than a playbill; but if she crossed the slack wire, she was a fairy; if she rode her favourite Arab in the *Haute Ecole*, she looked the daughter of a Centaur; and *La Petite Caroline's* benefit was sure to bring old and young to applaud the pretty little creature in every act. She was a perfect child withal, and when we came in the evening to watch the horses saddled and to chaff the company, we were sure to bring cakes or sweets for our pet Carry. A present I made her of a doll in a riding habit, with large, staring, glass eyes, and a real wig, made her my devoted friend at once. We were all quite sorry when the International Hippodrome found all the spare cash in Spirebury had been exhausted, and Professor Suttoni disappeared with his tent, horses, artistes, and all, Caroline included. I went to the station to see them off, and little Carry was loaded with bags of good things as she disappeared with the train to Fishport.

Little Carry was Xarolla.

And now I will tell you how I made Xarolla's acquaintance.

I was walking one summer morning in Paris up the Champs Elysées, with the firm intention of dissipating a headache by a constitutional as far as the cascade in the Bois, where I had promised to breakfast with Teddy Flighter, one of the best fellows that ever stepped in Her Majesty's uniform.

As I passed the Cirque, I saw, in letters six inches high, the word "Xarolla," very conspicuously calling my attention. On reading the bill I found that on that very evening the star artiste, *Mlle. Xarolla*, was to have a benefit, on which occasion not only would she appear on her favourite Arab, "Lightning," but she would also go through her marvellous Balloon Act, in which she was

without a rival. Xarolla was evidently the Parisian attraction.

Du reste, I had already seen her praises sung in the columns of the *Figaro*, and I considered myself lucky in getting a couple of reserved seats at the box-office of the Cirque, which I really believe were the last, as I was politely informed when I paid my money.

As I passed on, hoping I should arrive in time to appease my hunger at least, if not Teddy Flighter's impatience, I heard a silvery laugh on my right, and, looking round, saw the very prettiest little woman it has ever been my luck to set eyes on.

Dressed in a tight-fitting riding habit, with a small glossy hat set just a little cocked on her brown hair, which rippled over her eyebrows and struggled to get out of control over the back of her neck, sat in front of a small café a woman who, while rocking her chair backwards and forwards, was slashing her high-heeled boot with an ordinary riding-whip. Though laughing, her teeth were set, and there was a flash in her eye that almost illuminated her brown curls under her hat, and certainly denoted displeasure, in spite of the laugh which accompanied it.

The object of her displeasure appeared to be a gentleman who seemed a cross between a groom and an opera-singer, with a dash of sporting hair-cutter thrown in. He was occupied at that moment with five dogs, who sat up in a row with that broad grin of educated caninity which usually denotes an intense desire to jump through hoops and run up ladders on their way to a meal.

I was evidently assisting at a rehearsal; but judge of my astonishment, as I stopped an instant to see what the dogs would proceed to do, when I heard my own name mentioned, and the horsey gentleman, raising his

head, said, loud enough to scare the dogs on to all fours—

"Gad! so it is! Why, Captain, we were only talking of Spirebury and the old guv'nor Suttoni some five minutes ago. You don't seem to remember my wife?"

The amazon gave a decided scowl as he said "wife," but taking a tiny cigarette from her lips, and looking me frankly in the face with the most wonderful pair of deep blue eyes, and laughing now with a smile that dimpled her cheeks and showed her pearls of teeth to advantage, she held out her hand, crying—

"You've not forgot little Carry you gave the doll to at Spirebury, have you? I haven't, for I have her remains still, Captain."

And this was Carry. I could scarcely believe my eyes as I sat down beside her.

"So you really are La Petite Caroline?" I said, when Carry had sent her husband to find a garçon, who scarcely expected company at that early time.

"Not a bit of it! I'm 'Carry' to you, if you will call me so; but I beg to introduce to your notice, if you have not already seen her, Mademoiselle Xarolla, the star artiste, in the biggest letters I can get printed."

Saying which she rose, and holding her whip in both hands, she curtsied to the right and then to the left, and then kissed her hand to me with an artistic grace that deprived the action of any absurdity.

"You Xarolla? I had no idea I was in such luck. Then all Paris must envy me at this moment; but you don't mean to say you're married!"

"You're just about right, Captain; it is cruel, but it's a fact; and my husband's a clown, and I hate him."

"You don't mean to say that."

"No! He loves me, I believe, in his way, and would not hurt a hair of my head if I behave myself; but circumstances made us marry, and I should not wonder if circumstances parted us. I can't live like this long."

And a sad sigh left her involuntarily, while tears stood in her eyes as she sighed; but they soon made way for a laugh.

"Now you are going to have your coffee here, and we are going to talk about old times. I shall never forget the Irish major who wanted to give me lessons in military riding; and do you remember that stuck-up Miss What's-her-name, who couldn't understand how the officers could talk to such people as poor me?"

"So you are the Xarolla all Paris is running after! I am happy to say I have got seats for to-night, and if a bouquet as big as a cartwheel comes for you, you will know where it comes from."

"Oh, you good creature! we artistes all love bouquets, and the more we get the better we work! This is my first benefit at the Cirque, and I've had thirty-one letters already, promising flowers and suppers, and ardent admiration all round. But Joe is jealous, and makes life impossible."

Joe returned at this juncture, evidently impressed with an idea, which he seemed to have communicated to his five dogs, that I was an obstructionist.

The garçon arrived at the same time with coffee and liqueurs. No amount of Chartreuse seemed to make Joe amiable, nor did the lumps of gratuitous sugar persuade the three poodles and the bulldog that I had a right to be present, though the little fox-terrier had an opinion of his own, and was amiable to a degree that quite overwhelmed me.

Then I stopped laughing and chatting, till I found it would be useless to look for

Teddy in the Bois, and, as a convincing proof, a Victoria pulled up and Teddy himself jumped out, much to my astonishment, as I could not imagine how he could have detected me where I was. As he approached I rose to meet him, and there came a magical change over the features of all of us.

Joe turned livid with what looked like passion. Carry blushed with ill-disguised pleasure ; and Teddy Flighter looked almost angry, as he ejaculated—

“You here ! I don’t wonder you never turned up at the Cascade. You’re a nice fellow to keep an appointment !”

The poodles and the bulldog evidently knew Teddy well, for they nearly wagged their absurd tails off in recognition. But Joe whistling them up with something like an oath, and hurriedly saying that the rehearsal was waiting, almost dragged poor Carry into the Cirque close by.

I noticed a telegraphic despatch passing between her and Teddy, and a bit of paper fell as she walked off.

I turned away to light a cigar, and on looking round to pay the waiter for the coffee, I observed Teddy straightening himself up, and the paper gone.

As we got into the Victoria, Teddy, after telling the coachman to drive to the Grand Hotel, jerked out—

“How the deuce did *you* make *her* acquaintance ?”

I told him simply how we had been old friends when she was a girl who thought of nothing beyond her cakes and her doll ; and we drove amicably off to order a bouquet for that night. He confided to me how he was smitten with her uncommon grace and beauty ; he didn’t believe she was married ; he meant no harm.

However, he would send his own stall

(he had secured one long ago) to a friend, and he would go with me to the Cirque.

* * * * *

Xarolla was to appear first about nine, and we had dined comfortably at Ledoyen’s in time to find ourselves seated for the entry of clowns preceding the *beneficiaire’s* appearance.

Joe had lost all likeness to an opera tenor, and was now in full war paint—red, pointed wig, tight-fitting parti-coloured dress, covered with spangled butterflies, his moustache concealed with white paint, red spots on his cheeks, and black circumflex eyebrows painted on his forehead. *He* had seen us come in, and his whip came down on his poodles, for no apparent reason, with a force almost amounting to cruelty. Joe was popular, and applause made him soon forget his jealousy.

Our seats were close to the entry, and after Joe had left the arena with a fierce scowl at Teddy, a flutter went round the house as all the *écuyers*, in faultless coats and breeches, wearing the shiniest Napoleon boots, ranged themselves in two lines across the ring, while the orchestra preluded with chords and fanfares denoting the solemnity of the occasion.

When expectation was on tiptoe, a beautiful brown thoroughbred mare, with a good deal of Arab in its bright eyes and delicate nostrils, trotted in to the centre, mounted by *Mdlle. Xarolla* in person.

Her reception was what the French would call “colossal,” and to the deafening plaudits she replied by making her horse rear till timid spectators fancied she must roll over ; and then, when her mare resumed her normal position, and she bowed all round, the plaudits broke out again with doubled force.

Talk of jumping into people’s affections ! Xarolla charged down on every one’s heart,

s point ; but I at though her gesture, her eyes flashed at her neighbour's, and certainly not a Frenchman or Englishman who looked more likely to do as he did. He was the beau idéal of an officer—but I have no space for names. The bouquets were brought in and at last finished her performance, among which was an immense spray of white lilac and stephanotis, which I ordered, and one small tuft of orchids, which she fastened on her habit just over her shoulder, after kissing it—an action which seemed natural to all those who were not in the secret ; but Joe was not one of these, as she had scarcely time to slip off her horse at the entry before the maddened husband tore the flowers from her corsage and trampled them under foot.

"I don't care ! You can't tear the rest out !" we could hear her say ; and Teddy made a start, which I luckily suppressed, keeping him in his place, though he was evidently boiling over with rage.

In the *entr'acte* we went into the stables, but Carry was not to be seen. She was to appear again before the evening was over.

When Xarolla reappeared, she was led in by the Ring Master, Joe was close behind her, and was evidently finishing an angry altercation. This time she turned round and sent a kiss from the ends of her fingers to my neighbour, whose ears tingled with delight at the compliment.

Little Carry had grown into the beautiful Xarolla without losing any of the grace of her girlhood. Everything she did was without effort, as it seemed—without difficulty.

The ribands had been flown, the banners had been crossed, and now the paper hoops,

which in this case were doubled so as to look like big drums, were held up by the clowns for Xarolla to leap through.

Joe was standing opposite to us, and every now and then gave vent to some "wheeze" which might have been considered personal had any one understood it. He kept up his observations as Xarolla went round, and something she said as she passed seemed to lash him to fury.

Anyhow, when she next came round, as she leapt, the clown jerked the hoops and caught her foot.

One exclamation of horror was heard from all present. The horse was trotting round, and Xarolla had fallen on the "bank," on the wooden rim of the circus, and had not risen. Teddy Flighter had made one spring, and lifted the inanimate form of poor little Carry in his arms, much to the disgust of the *écuyers*, and greatly to the delight of the Parisians, who dearly love anything theatrical.

Teddy carried her off to her room, when Joe arrived and took her angrily from his arms.

"What have you to do with her ? She is not your wife !" said Joe, sulkily.

"Thank God ! I am not her husband, or I might have her death on my conscience," was Teddy's reply, as he turned away, after tipping the dresser to bring him news of her recovery, for there was no bruise and no bones broken. Joe, the clown, really seemed in an agony at what had happened ; and we left him bathing her temples with a woman's tenderness.

* * * * *

Next morning heralded as beautiful a summer's day as Paris ever saw. This time I was determined to breakfast at the Cascade, without a thought of being stopped by Xarolla or Joe, or the poodles and the bulldog, if it came to that. As I passed the little

Circus Café the chairs were there and the garçon, but not a soul besides, not the shadow of a fox-terrier. I was led briskly on to the Bois de Boulogne, and as I turned through the gate of the fortifications, and saw the sun streaming down on the bright trees, I felt that in the shades of those *allées* flirtation on such a day must be more successful than usual. As I approached the lake I heard sounds of cantering horses, and as I looked there came down a side avenue Teddy Flighter on his chestnut "Clancarty," and a lady on a brown thoroughbred by his side. I soon saw who the lady was. All smiles and happiness she was listening to Teddy, who was evidently laying himself out for success. The canter as they came nearer was getting faster and faster, when I heard a shot fired. Down came the brown mare, and the beautiful Xarolla pitched over into the dust.

I rushed up simultaneously with Ted, who had pulled up his horse as soon as he could, and dismounted.

Xarolla never appeared again to be received with plaudits and bouquets. Little Carry was dead, for she had fallen on her neck, her mare having been shot in the shoulders and brought down wounded. The poor beast was lying in the dust with her nose in the hand of her dead mistress. She still wore the old smile, and looked as lovely in her pallor as she ever had before. We opened her dress with the last hope she might be fainting. Her heart was no longer beating, but there were last night's orchids hidden beneath her habit. Teddy sobbed like a child.

Joe has nêd, one long ago) to a friend,
the poodles I 'with me to the Cirque.
has never had * * *
little Carry! * * * near first about nine,
at Ledoyen's
for the entry
his appear-

AN EPILOGUE.

BY H. SAVILE CLARKE.

THE curtain falls, and all the whirl
Is over of this mimic life,
Some swain has lost a faithless girl,
Or some young lover gain'd a wife.
The passions of an older age
Have fire and force within them still ;
Or haply on æsthetic stage,
A modern drama comes to thrill.

And you applaud us, glad to know
How earthly care you can forget,
Which, (I learnt Horace long ago,)
They say "post equitem" sits yet.
But do you ever in your dreams,
And may Heaven send them fair and bright,
Think what sometimes the stage-play seems—
To those who act it every night?

If not, one word ere roll of wheel
Proclaims my lady's carriage there ;
Just credit us with souls to feel
Emotion that you may not share.
Remember when we play our parts,
An idle evening to beguile,
That like you we have human hearts,
And mask their aching with a smile.

THE END.



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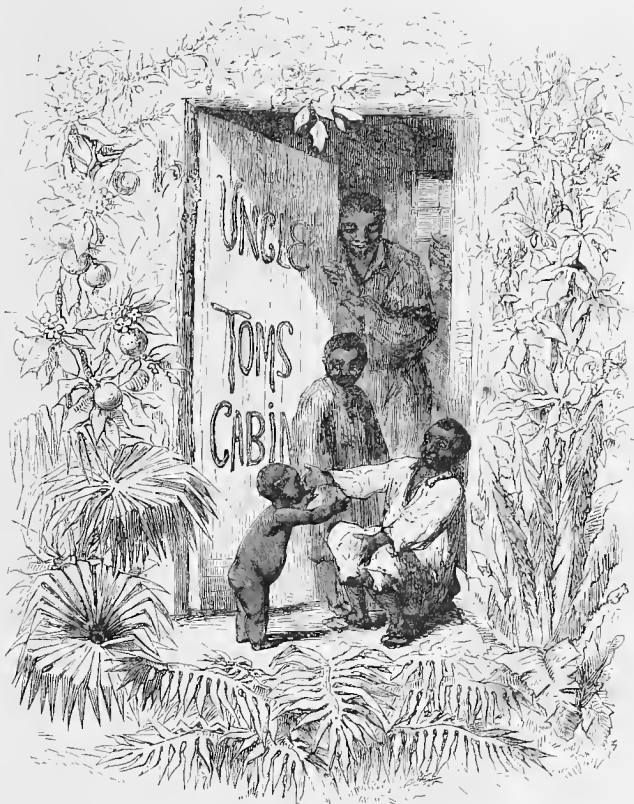
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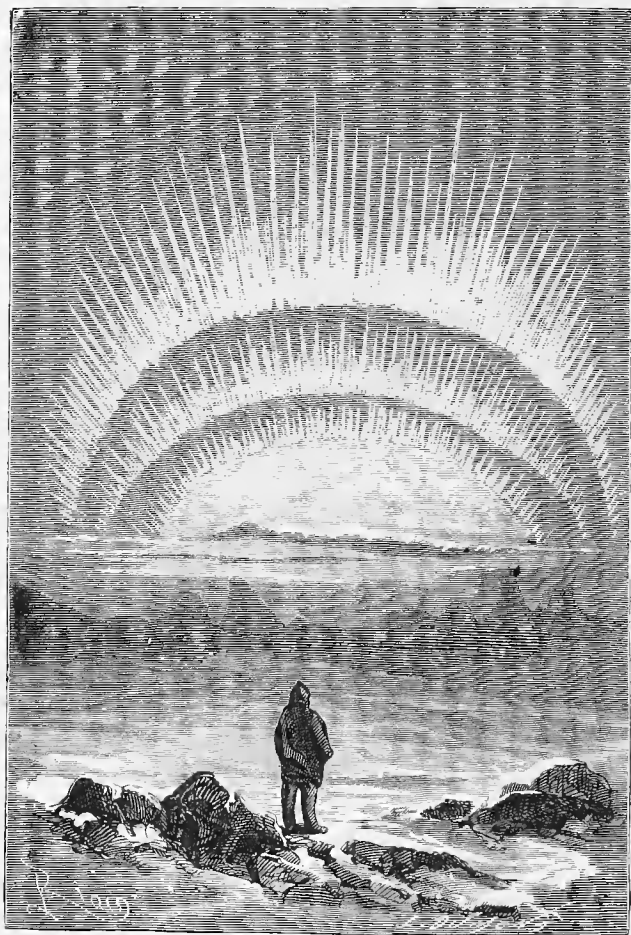


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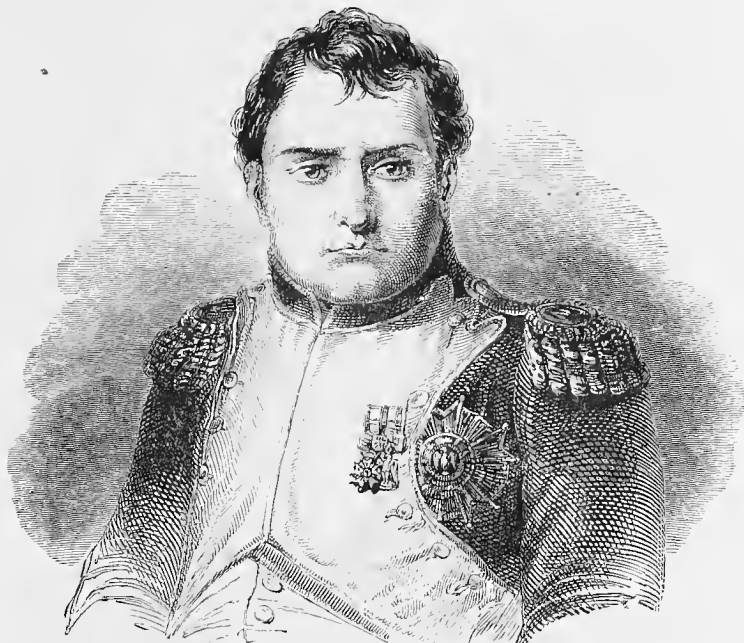
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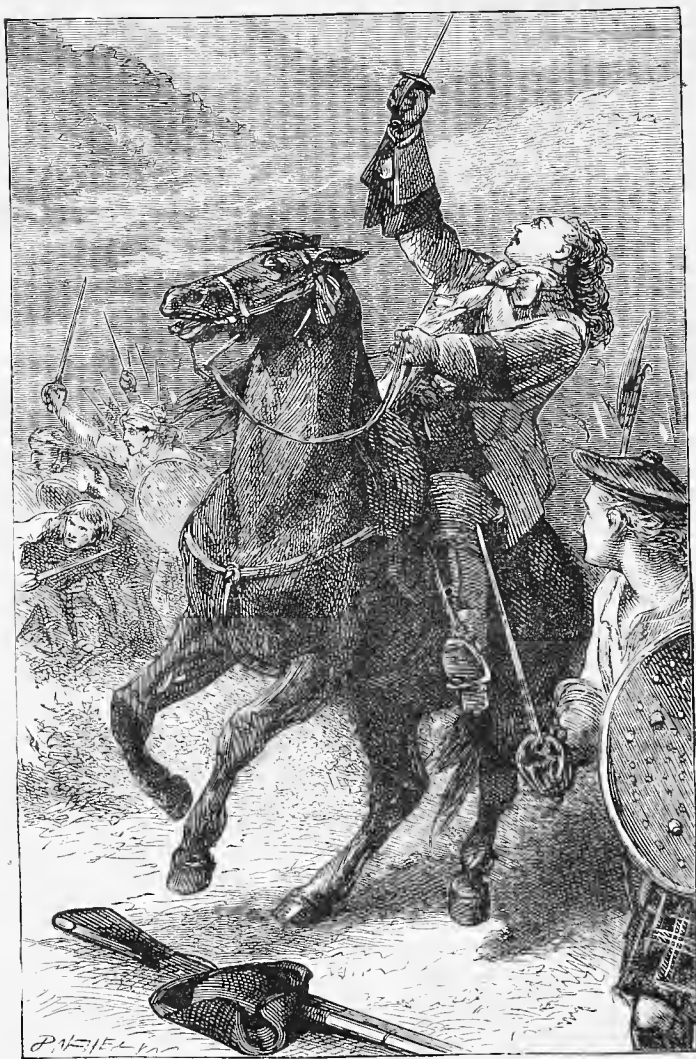
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